the weekly Standard

MAY 27, 2002

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As America's streets get safer, crime soars in Europe.

by Eli Lehrer

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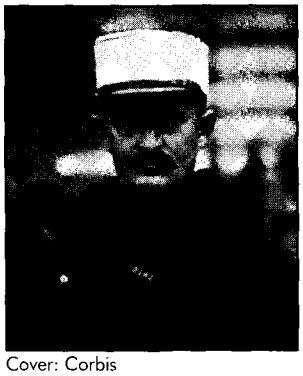

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The Saudis vs. Arafat?

The terrorism documents captured on the West Bank by the Israeli Defense Forces contain fascinating details about the friendly relations between Saudi Arabia and Hamas, and consequent tensions between the Saudis and the Palestinian Authority. The documents seem to confirm the long-circulating rumor in Arab and Muslim circles that the Saudis want to displace Arafat in favor of Hamas, and have used their financial and political resources to that end. The reason: to supplant the secular nationalist politics of Arafat with the Wahhabi ideology favored by Riyadh.

Referring to correspondence between the Palestinian Authority and the Saudis in December 2000 and January 2001, the IDF commentary notes: "In these documents, Arafat complains about the fact that the Saudi aid is not transferred to the PA areas via the PA, and it does not reach the Fatah, but is given to Hamas and radical Islamic groups associated with Hamas, thus weakening the PA. The documents concern discussions held in Riyadh between the Palestinians and the Saudis on this issue. In hindsight, it can be stated that Arafat failed in his attempt to persuade the Saudis to channel the financial aid via the PA, and the phenomenon of transferring Saudi funds to Hamas elements continued and continues until the present."

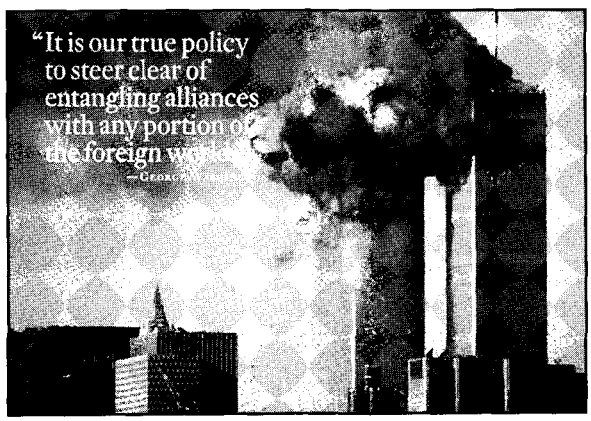
If there is anything to be learned from the captured documents, it is that the Saudis must remain suspect as partners for either the Israelis or the Palestinians in any resumption of peace negotiations. If their funding of Hamas makes their peace gestures to the Israelis two-faced, it makes their standing as supporters of the Palestinians—the vast majority of whom are non-Wahhabi, given local traditions of secularism and the influence of Arab Christians in the nationalist movement—even more dubious. Indeed, it only reinforces the suspicion that the Saudis' gambit in publicly injecting themselves into the Israeli-Palestinian confrontation has a sole aim: to divert attention from their involvement in the events of September 11. ♦

Cato Entangled

The lavish 2001 Annual Report of the Cato Institute—which doubles as a celebration of the 25th anniversary of the eminent libertarian think tank—has just landed in THE SCRAPBOOK's inbox. Much of it is unsurprising, including the advocacy of a "principled non-interventionist approach to foreign affairs." Not content to leave things at the level of aspirational generality, however, Cato's president and chairman, Edward H. Crane and William A. Niskanen, go on—in the report's jointly signed introductory "message"—to assert that "the dangers of accepting the role of the world's policeman are clearly evident" right now, in particular, what with this al Qaeda terrorist business and whatnot.

THE SCRAPBOOK confesses that it was a bit unsettled by the America-sorta-had-it-coming atmospherics of this little lecturette. Maybe, we hoped, we were reading a little too much into it.

But no—there's an astonishingly tasteless two-page spread later in the report. Over a full-color photograph of the second September 11 jetliner exploding with a giant ball of flame into the World Trade Center, Cato has superimposed its favorite George Washington quotation: "It is our true policy to steer clear of entangling alliances with any portion of the foreign world." So not only did we sort of have it coming to us for ignoring Cato's foreign policy wisdom, but there's a particular villain. The United States, after all, has but a single "entangling alliance" in the Middle Eastern "portion of the foreign world." That would be with Israel—American friendship for which, the Cato Institute apparently believes, is somehow responsible for the deaths of 3,000 New Yorkers. ♦



A Sharpe Stick in the Eye

If there's one thing reporters tend to enjoy most—even more than, say, free stuff—it's a nasty political fight. And political fights haven't come much nastier than the Newark mayoral race—a classic "machine" versus "reform" collision, in which the machine last Tuesday prevailed.

Typically, national media outlets don't pay close attention to most mayoral races, let alone Newark's. But because of the downright dirtiness of the campaign, in which four-term Dem-

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ocratic mayor Sharpe James defeated Ivy-league upstart Democrat Cory Booker, there was a lot of coverage. From the *Associated Press* to the *Daily News*, from the *New York Post* to *ABC World News Tonight*, every detail was lovingly recounted: the campaign poster theft, the vans blaring sound at each other's campaign events, the nutcake allegations by Sharpe that Booker was a "closet Republican," who was "aligned with the Jews," and who took money from the KKK and the Taliban.

The most standout detail, however, was suspiciously edited. In each of the aforementioned news organizations' accounts, Booker alleged that the black James had called him a "white boy." This is newsworthy not only because Booker himself is black, but because according to Booker, James prefaced his slur with the f-word. Not that f-word, but "faggot" (as in "faggot white boy"). Aside from columnist George Will, the first part of the remark went all but unreported.

In his victory speech, James, miraculously transformed into a healer, suggested that "We must come together to continue to rebuild our city." That could be more easily done if he'd stop calling people faggots, not that he has to worry about reporters reprinting the epithet that dare not speak its name. ♦

Life During Wartime

THE SCRAPBOOK has not seen a better illustration of how the world has changed since September 11 than an article by Walter Pincus and Thomas Ricks that ran in the *Washington Post* on May 10. The story concerned a failed CIA attempt to kill Gulbuddin Hekmatyar with a drone-fired missile. Hekmatyar, once a maverick warlord in the fight against the Soviet occupation, today leads Afghanistan's terrorist Hezb-e-Islami movement, which maintains links to al Qaeda. He has resisted the U.S. military presence, sought to disrupt British forces involved in Operation Snipe near the Pakistan border, and agitated for the overthrow of Afghanistan's interim leader Hamid Karzai.

One cannot pass through a single paragraph in the story without running across material that would have been a front-page revelation nine months ago:

1. The CIA operates aircraft that fire missiles. 2. The CIA is involved in trying to kill hostile foreign leaders. 3. The U.S. government has turned against its onetime protégé with such a vengeance that one "senior administration official" is quoted as saying, "Sadly, he survived." 4. The CIA now functions in such a way that we read about such missions in the paper.

The article ran on page A24. ♦

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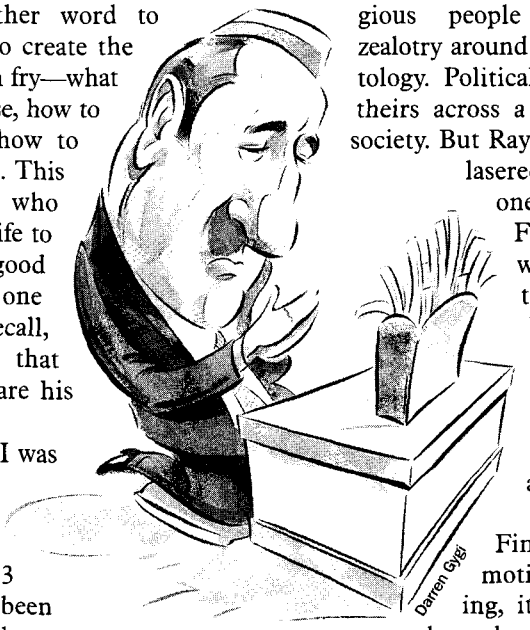
Casual

The Fryers Club

When I was a teenager, I stumbled across a small paperback autobiography by Ray Kroc, the founder of McDonald's. As I remember it, Kroc described the epiphany that was the seed of his whole empire: The key to creating a successful hamburger restaurant is not the hamburger, it's the fries. People want really good french fries.

Much of the book was taken up with Kroc's quest, and there really is no other word to describe it, to create the perfect french fry—what potatoes to use, how to slice them, how to dry them, etc. This was a man who devoted his life to making good fries. At one point, if I recall, Kroc says that french fries are his religion.



Naturally, I was impressed by this statement of faith. If, at 13 or 14, I had been blessed with the same sort of practical fervor that Kroc possessed, I would have had a life-transforming moment reading that book. Ah! I would have exclaimed, Find Your Fry! Follow Your Fry!

I would have had myself grow up to be about 6'5" with a monumental head of hair and enormous teeth, and I would have become a motivational speaker (because in every gold rush, it's mostly the people selling pans who get rich). And my message would have been Find Your Fry! Follow Your Fry! If I had done this, books like *Who Moved My Cheese?*, currently in its third or fourth century on the best-seller lists, would be a mere footnote in publishing history. I'd be the one with the line of motivational videos, starring in Caribbean cruise seminars, holding $2-million-a-throw pep rallies for mid-level corporate dreamers in exurban sports arenas.

The message of Find Your Fry! Follow Your Fry! would be that the key to success in this world is having the ability to focus an entire lifetime's worth of fevered zealotry on one trivial thing, product line, or concept. Religious people spread their zealotry around on a vast eschatology. Political zealots spread theirs across a huge vision of society. But Ray Kroc's zealotry lasered down on that one thing, the fry. For him, the fry was the alpha and the omega, the burning center under his magnifying glass-concentrated beam of energy and ambition.

So you must Find Your Fry! (in motivational speaking, it's important to keep the uppercase letters and the exclamation points). You must find the insight or product wrinkle that will become your own personal key to paradise. Once you have that life-altering moment when you and your Fry! become one, every waking hour is devoted to your Fry! Every thought, when you are 20 and when you are 60, is devoted to the ultimate realization of your Fry! And you come to believe that your Fry!, if you can only perfect it, will change the world. If you can make the perfect Fry!, then peoples will unite, enmities will fade, history will come to a glorious completion, and you, not coincidentally, will become enormously rich and successful.

On May 13, the *Wall Street Journal* published an advertising supplement called "The New Pioneers" which contained a series of articles on business people who are working on technology's cutting edge. They were all Fry! followers.

When Helen Greiner was 11, she went to see *Star Wars* and she saw R2-D2 and she thought, "Robots!" She's devoted her whole life to small robots. She went off to M.I.T., interned at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, and now she runs iRobot Corp., which is going to build little robots. Within 10 years, she insists, every U.S. home with a computer is going to have a robot too. "If we don't take robotics to the next level," she declares, "we'll have a lot of explaining to do to our grandchildren."

The *Journal* profiled other Fry!-ists. Charles Lieber has devoted himself to growing nanowires, only a few atoms thick, that will conduct electricity. "It's really an amazing time . . . My students are working day and night, and . . . I've never worked so hard in my life," he exclaims. Mary-Dell Chilton is working on a technique to place new genes onto specific spots on plant chromosomes. "I am in the lab day, night, Sundays and holidays," says the woman who has been labeled the Queen of Agrobacterium.

Balanced perspective is not exactly a feature of the people the *Journal* profiled. If you met them on a cruise (assuming they ever took vacations), you would find that they are not scintillating conversationalists, having absolutely no interest in any topic other than their Fry! But I do believe, breaking all the rules of all the philosophers, that they are happy in their narrowness. And there is something noteworthy about their Herculean arrogance. They really do think they are going to change the world. And some of them will make measurable contributions to human life. Ray Kroc, the man who worshipped at the altar of the french fry, really did learn how to make quite good ones.

David Brooks

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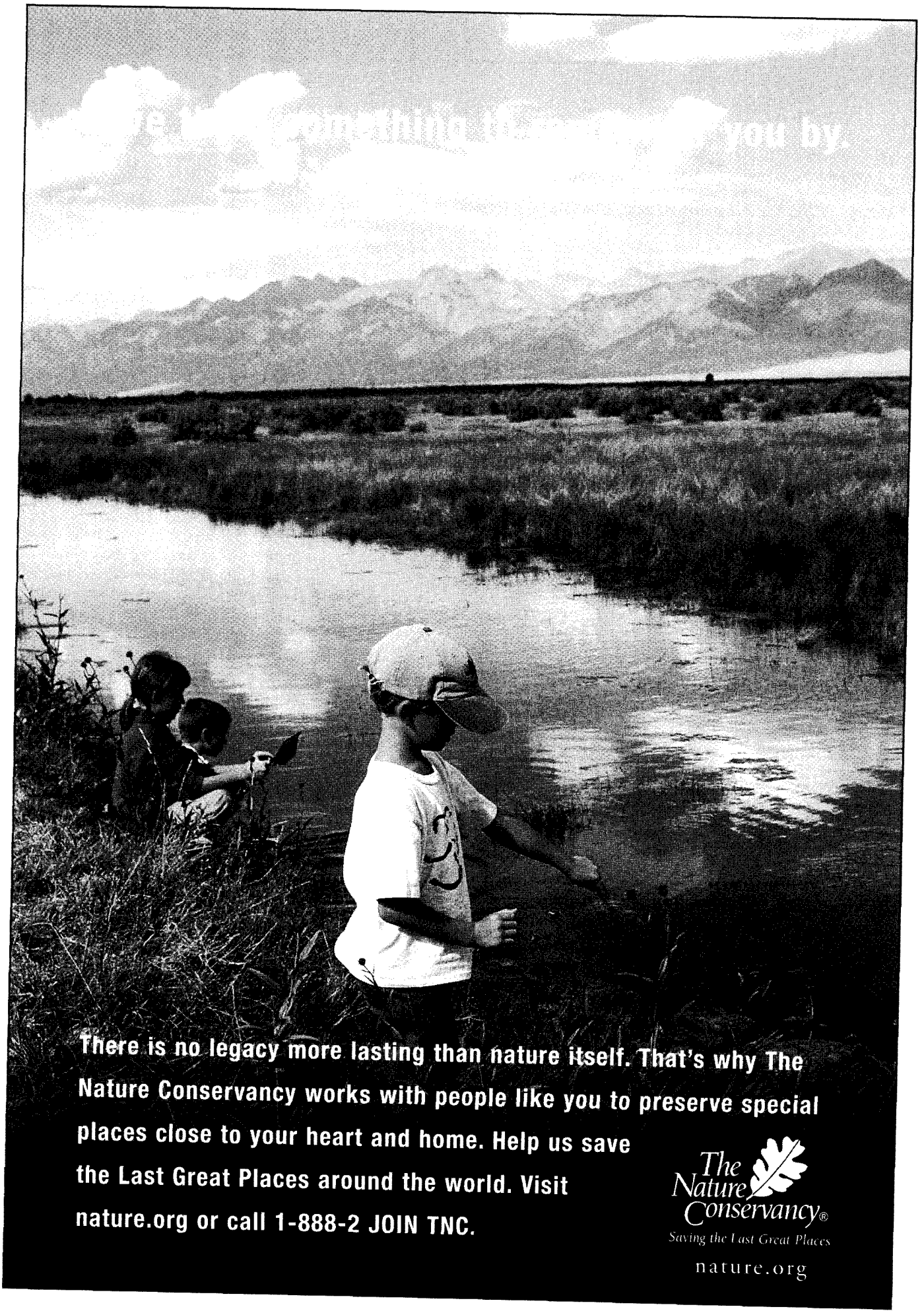

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Alexis de Novak

In "Michael Novak's Patriotism: How Christian is America?" (May 13), Robert P. Kraynak faults Michael Novak for failing to provide a "complete account of the converging and conflicting demands . . . of how to live as a citizen of two worlds while giving to each its proper love and devotion."

Actually, such a project has been underway for some good time. As Alexis de Tocqueville observed in *Democracy in America*, II, 5.44.:

"Another remark is applicable to the clergy of all communions: American priests do not try to attract and fix all the attentions of man on the future life; they willingly abandon a part of his heart to present cares; they seem to consider the goods of the world as important although secondary objects; if they do not associate themselves with industry, they are at least interested in its progress and applaud it, and while constantly showing to the faithful *the other world as the great object of their hopes and fears*, they do not forbid them from honestly searching for well-being in this one. Far from bringing out how these are divided and contrary, they rather apply themselves to *finding the spot at which they touch and are bound to each other*" (emphasis mine).

That intersection, that spot, has been the touchstone for Michael Novak's brilliant intellectual labors over nearly half a century.

Michael S. Joyce
Phoenix, AZ

Dower Distortions

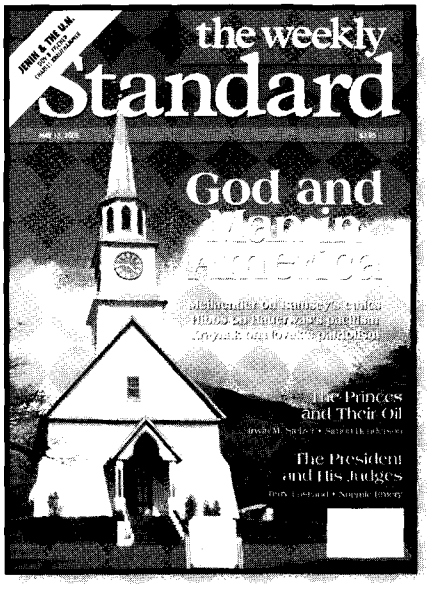
The Scrapbook takes justifiable umbrage ("Slandering Captain Kelly," May 13) at Pete McCloskey's shabby attempt to equate the death of Colin Kelly to those of young Palestinian suicide bombers.

The bad news is that there is nothing new to this. In 1986, Professor John Dower, then of the University of California, San Diego, published a book entitled *War Without Pity: Race and Power in the Pacific War.* For many leftist types, this remains the interpretative text of the war in the Pacific in World War II. The book, however, is nothing more than several hundred pages of moral equivalence.

First, Dower attempts to explain away all Japanese "idiosyncrasies" in the conduct of the war. Second, he uses spurious comparisons to claim that we did the same thing. And, presto, the United States behaved no differently than the Japanese.

A principal part of this is his attempt to equate the kamikaze with the actions of U.S. servicemen who, when they realized that death in combat was inevitable, opted to take several of the bad guys with them by, say, crashing a plane into a Japanese ship.

It is all nonsense of course, and odious nonsense at that. But it hasn't stopped him from being the expert of choice to explain things Japanese on PBS, etc.



J.L. Krizsa
Tucson, AZ

Hauerwas on Hauerwas

Paul Ramsey, commenting on a book just published on his work, once said to me, "What really bothers me is not that they got me wrong, but they made me sound so damn boring." I am, therefore, gratified that Thomas Hibbs not only got me right, but also did so in an entertaining manner ("Stanley Hauerwas's Pacifism," May 13).

Hibbs, however, has confused two stories. It is true that when I taught at Notre Dame, I did begin instruction for discerning whether I should become a Catholic. But my wife at the time took violent exception, and I did not continue the process. In truth, I had begun not because I wanted to become a Catholic in some general sense, but rather because my son Adam's life and mine were sustained during that dark time by the people we worshipped with at Sacred Heart at Notre Dame.

Hibbs is right that my current marriage to the Rev. Dr. Paula Gilbert means I find it difficult now to become a Catholic, but that is not because of any objections from her, but because of my own concerns about Catholic recognition of her priesthood. Hibbs makes a nice point that the Methodist Church does not recognize her priesthood either, but that is a disputed matter in Methodism. Suffice it to say that Paula and I continue to give thanks for the many Catholics who claim us as friends and sustain our attempt to live as Christians.

Finally, I have been known to swear like a bricklayer because I am a bricklayer. After an article in *Lingua Franca* made much of me as a foul-mouthed theologian, however, I swore never again to use two common swear words. My students are holding me to that resolution. Of course, since I am a Texan, I have a number of expressions that some might regard as too "colorful" for a theologian. There is one thing about which I'm sure Hibbs is right: Whatever I have done, the best thing that has been done through me is the students who have made me better than I am.

Stanley Hauerwas
Duke Divinity School
Durham, NC

A Very Special Place

As a doctoral candidate in clinical psychology and (!) a conservative, I think I know more about history and civics than those in the National Council for Social Studies who are certified to teach them ("Anti-Social Studies," Kay S. Hymowitz, May 6).

But if being an American is "nothing special," then why is it that so many "global citizens" from other countries are

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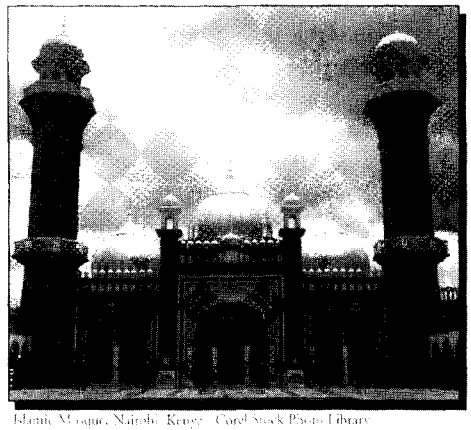

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trying to get here? Why do people get on barely seaworthy boats to flee Cuba? Why are full-term pregnant women from Mexico crossing the Rio Grande in hopes of having their children born as U.S. citizens? Why do people line up at 4 A.M outside our embassies to submit visa applications? Why are people willing to "marry" U.S. citizens in order to get green cards? I guess that these miseducators forgot to inform the rest of the world that living in America is "nothing special."

As Hymowitz implies, these miseducators apparently cannot tell the difference between the freedoms of the United States and the lack thereof in such "tolerant" regimes as China, Sudan, and Iraq. If these places are "no different" from America, I would support their emigration to these fine destinations.

MITCHELL HICKS
Cincinnati, OH

In reading "Anti-Social Studies" about the failing of the National Council for Social Studies, I realized how little I actually know about the lessons of America, lessons that I'm slowly learning now. Kay S. Hymowitz's description of the current curriculum was right out of my own classes during junior high and high school. I regret having to make up for the NCSS's deficiency on my own time.

GERARD V. SCHNEYER III
Staten Island, NY

THANKS FOR THE WIT

IT SEEMS the Parody page generates little in the way of reader mail—at least the mail that appears in the weekly Correspondence section—so I would like to congratulate THE WEEKLY STANDARD on the excellent Parody that appeared in the April 22 issue. The piece satirizes very neatly President Bush's recent waffling on Palestinian terror in the Middle East—a far cry from his with-us-or-against-us decree to the joint session of Congress on September 20.

It registered, for me, all the anger and frustration I feel at having to listen to figures from Foggy Bottom—especially Secretary of State Colin Powell—repeatedly tell us that a criminal and terrorist—one Yasser Arafat—is the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, and call the Israelis's response to terror an "incursion." My respect, incidentally, for Powell was markedly diminished by his performance when he visited the Middle East.

As for the representative of the Palestinian people, what has he done for these people over the last thirty years but subject them to repeated and protracted waves of poverty, murder, and upheaval, even after receiving millions of dollars from not only the United States but his so-called Arab friends as well? Will we never learn that Arafat is nothing more than a terrorist, a criminal, and a genuine thug?

JOE MURRAY
Round Rock, TX

EUROPE TALKS BACK

I HAVE READ David Brooks's "Among the Bourgeoisophobes" (April 6), and I must admit that he is right about a lot of the attitudes in Europe. He does, however generalize a little too much: The United States has many, many friends in Europe and in my country, the Netherlands. We have always had special ties with the United States, and I am sure we will have those in the future. Not everybody here thinks badly of Israel and of the Jews, although I admit that if the Palestinians told us that they were socialists, the left-wingers in the Netherlands would start to support them.

My mother and I were liberated by the Canadians at the end of the Second World War, and my father was liberated by the Americans in Germany, where he was forced to work in slavery. Our family—and it is the same for thousands of European families—has been raised to appreciate the United States for what it did to ensure our freedom. American soldiers came from afar to grant us the same freedom they had at home, and many of them died on our fields toward that end. This will never be forgotten by my generation, and we tell it to our children and grandchildren.

The Netherlands backed the United States when it fought in Vietnam and the Middle East. Please note that only those people with the loudest voices—leftist ones, of course—here receive the attention of the international press; and the greater part of our domestic journalists also claim to be leftists.

I had to write in, because when THE WEEKLY STANDARD opines about the Europeans, it also means me, my family, and my people.

WILLIAM H. VANDERSTEK
Netherlands

EXCUSE MY CONFUSION, but why does David Brooks include in "Among the Bourgeoisophobes" a list of "bourgeoisophobe" authors and their books—a list that includes Eldrige Cleaver's hate-soaked *Soul on Ice*, Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism*, Allan Bloom's *The Closing of the American Mind*, and Robert Bork's *Slouching Toward Gomorrah?*

Lasch, though a liberal, defended traditional bourgeois social norms against the onslaught of hedonism and nihilism in the wake of the cultural revolution of the 1960s. In a wide-ranging survey, Bloom saw the roots of student apathy in the 1980s in the riptide of divorce that had introduced a new measure of insecurity and deracination to American home life. And Bork, bourgeois to his very fingertips, was doing battle with Ted Kennedy when David Brooks was but a pup.

Perhaps David Brooks has confused the two halves of his famous "Bobo" thesis. Social conservatism may be anti-bohemian, but it is not anti-bourgeois.

ROBERT STACY MCCAIN
Assistant National Editor
Washington Times
Washington, DC

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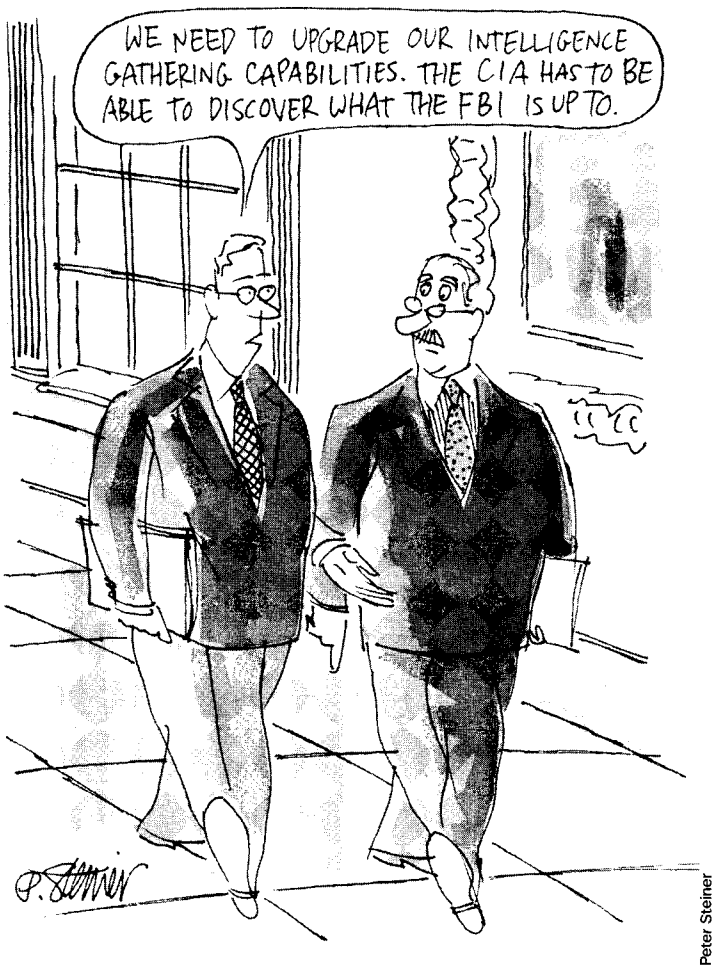
the weekly Standard

Time for an Investigation

If President Bush knows what's good for the country—and we think he does—he will immediately appoint an independent, blue-ribbon commission to investigate the government's failure to anticipate and adequately prepare for the terrorist attacks of September 11. Make George Shultz and Sam Nunn co-chairmen. Give the commission full and unfettered access to all intelligence from the CIA and FBI and to all relevant internal administration documents. Instruct the commission to produce a public report in six months that can stand as the definitive judgment of what went wrong and why.

There are three reasons such an investigation is necessary. First, the administration is now in danger of looking as if it has engaged in a cover-up. The carefully worded and evasive statements by various administration spokesmen in response to the report of the president's August 6 CIA briefing have raised as many questions as they have answered. We understand the conundrum that administration spokesmen face. They can't be precise about what they did or didn't know without revealing classified information. We also presume the administration has nothing to hide. But the cat is out of the bag. The ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, Richard Shelby, says that "we've just scratched the surface." The country needs to be assured that a reputable and unbiased group is going beneath the surface to find the truth.



Peter Steiner

Nor can we assume that the investigation already in progress by a special joint congressional committee will do the trick. Given the vulgar partisanship into which most elected officials descended last week, we have no confidence that any congressional committee can come up with a reputable and authoritative report.

Furthermore, regardless of what Congress does, the president should order an investigation for the sake of accountability within the executive branch. Ever since September 11 we have been troubled and puzzled that almost no one in the government seems to have been held responsible—much less, heaven forbid, stepped forward to assume responsibility—for failure. Was what happened on September 11 the consequence of everyone doing their job perfectly? Can it really be that no one

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made a mistake? And if someone did make a mistake, shouldn't that someone be held accountable, just a little? People lose jobs in government for hiring nannies and forgetting to pay their taxes. In the military, officers resign when something goes wrong on their watch, even if they were personally blameless for what happened. Isn't it possible that some people should be reprimanded, or even lose their jobs, when 3,000 Americans are killed in a terrorist attack? For the past eight months the Bush administration has essentially been saying that everything and everyone worked just fine. That is absurd and unsustainable.

And, of course, it's perilous. The third reason we need an investigation is that the system did *not* work. Either we didn't have the intelligence we should have had before September 11. Or the information was not adequately distributed and therefore key signals were missed. Or the intelligence was assembled but wasn't taken seriously enough. Or it was taken seriously but insufficient action was taken to prevent an attack. We don't know where the system broke down. We only know that it did.

Given the vulgar partisanship into which most elected officials descended last week, we have no confidence that any congressional committee can come up with a reputable and authoritative report.

Surely the first step in fixing the system—and thereby defending ourselves against the next attack—is to identify what went wrong or who performed badly. Isn't anyone troubled by the fact that if the failure stemmed partly from incompetence, then the incompetent people are still at their vitally important posts? Isn't President Bush troubled? If it was the system that failed, then should that same system be left in place because no one is willing to take a hard look at how and why it failed?

We understand the administration's reluctance to go through this wrenching process. We understand, too, why the president's supporters are reluctant to demand an investigation. It was nauseating last week to watch Democratic politicians trying to score cheap points against President Bush, treating this most serious of questions as if it were another made-to-order Washington scandal. "What we have to do now is to find out what the president, what the White House, knew about the events leading up to 9/11, when they knew it, and, most importantly, what was done about it at that time," said Dick Gephardt smarmily, desperately trying to fasten blame on the president à la Watergate.

Unfortunately, the Bush administration, too, has gone into scandal mode—into a defensive crouch. Vice President Dick Cheney came out swinging, claiming that any criticism, even a call for an investigation of the administration's actions before September 11, was "thoroughly irresponsible . . . in a time of war." But he's wrong. It's precisely because we're in a war that we need an investigation to find out where we failed. After Pearl Harbor, there were half a dozen such investigations. Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the first—just after Pearl Harbor. President Bush should follow that war president's lead. Then he should get back to the business of winning the war.

—*William Kristol and Robert Kagan*

Brave New Patents

Over the past year, the president, Congress, and the nation have been engaged in a serious public debate on human cloning. It has featured congressional hearings, industry lobbying, a House vote banning all human cloning, and months of delay and equivocation in the Senate.

In all this time, no one bothered to check with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. It now turns out that a patent was granted more than a year ago to researchers at the University of Missouri for mammal and human reproductive cloning—a discovery we owe to Andrew Kimbrell of the International Center for Technology Assessment, which has done heroic work making sense of this and other Brave New World patents.

The University of Missouri patent seems to include exclusive rights to the cloned *embryos*, cloned *fetuses*, and cloned *children* that their new process might one day create. Which is to say, it turns human life into a commodity—to be made, manipulated, exploited, and destroyed.

Surely much of the fault lies with the patent-holding

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researchers themselves. They could easily have included the word "nonhuman" before the word "mammal" in their patent application, in which they request patent ownership of the "living, cloned products produced by each of the methods described herein." But they did not limit themselves to animals. They wanted control over human clones, too.

Similar patent applications are pending. For example, a group of researchers from Massachusetts has applied for a patent that allows them "to use tissues derived from NT [i.e., cloned] embryos, fetuses or offspring, including human and ungulate tissues," and to own the patent rights to the "progeny of the [cloned] offspring."

In other words, they want to make human clones, harvest their organs, and own the rights to their children. They want to use some human beings as raw materials to help others.

Of course, those who seek such patents will tell us that this is not their intention. They will say their critics are crying wolf. They will say that it is only the 14-day-old cloned embryos that they want. And they will say that it is only to save your dying mother or dying child that they want them.

But are we really to trust as benefactors those who would so unapologetically request the legal right to turn their fellow men and women into property? Are we to stand by and watch—in naive disbelief or naive inaction—as the precedent for a new, inhuman commerce in human beings is established and normalized?

Stuart Newman, founder of the Council for Responsible Genetics, put it well in testimony before the Senate: "Once we have clonal embryos for a while and have gotten used to the idea, who would turn a deaf ear to calls by patients and their loved ones for these superior therapeutics?" Who would turn away from "improved products of this work, up to and including full-term clones from which to harvest organs"?

Indeed, in just the last year we have seen how quickly moral lines dissolve in the face of promised medical progress. We have seen how the need to use only embryos "left over" from in vitro fertilization (which are going to die anyway, advocates said) has become the need to create cloned embryos explicitly for research and destruction. And we can imagine how the need for cloned embryos will soon become the need for later-term cloned fetuses—something these patents anticipate and endorse.

Though the patent was not formally granted until April 3, 2001, the decision to grant it was made before President Bush was elected and before his choice, former congressman Jim Rogan, became director of the Patent Office. But the fact that no one in the Patent Office or the administration seemed to know such a patent existed—or that those who knew about it and approved it did not seem to understand or care about what they were doing—suggests how urgent legislative action on both human cloning and the patenting of human life really is.

And this leaves us with the third culprit in this case: the Senate leadership, which promised in February, then in March, then in April, then in May, promptly to consider legislation, proposed by senators Sam Brownback and Mary Landrieu, banning all human cloning, legislation which passed in the House by over 100 votes.

There are two other bills in the Senate that also claim to ban human cloning. The first is sponsored by senators Arlen Specter, Ted Kennedy, Dianne Feinstein, and Orrin Hatch, and it is a masterpiece of disingenuousness. It redefines human cloning as the implantation of a cloned embryo; it claims to establish regulations on the use of cloned embryos, when in fact it shields such research from future regulation; and it puts the government in the novel and unsavory position of endorsing the creation of cloned human embryos and then mandating their destruction. It might as well be called the "Human Embryo Cloning Promotion Act of 2002."

The second bill, sponsored by Senator Byron Dorgan, is equally bad. In an effort to avoid taking a position on the creation and use of cloned embryos, it ends up allowing the implantation of cloned embryos into human, animal, or artificial wombs, where they might be left to develop into later-stage fetuses, and then mined for tissue or organs.

Both of these bills would end up aiding the very thing they claim to ban: reproductive cloning. They would allow the technology of human cloning to develop; they would lead to the creation of large numbers of cloned embryos; and their claimed prohibition on reproductive cloning would be legally unenforceable—short of forced abortions—if one of these embryos were to be implanted.

In short, these bills do not really ban human cloning. They are not compromises. They are fictions.

This is a moment when all parties need to act decisively and responsibly. The Senate needs to pass a real ban on human cloning. Congress and the president need to develop and pass legislation making it illegal—or making clear that it is already illegal—to patent human embryos, human fetuses, or human beings. And the biotech industry needs to denounce the reckless excesses of some of its members, which so far it has instead labored and lobbied to defend.

At the press conference when senators Specter, Kennedy, Feinstein, and Hatch announced the release of their pro-research cloning legislation, Specter was asked when a cloned embryo could no longer be used morally for research. He replied: "I have not found it helpful to get into the details."

It is now time to consider the details and the facts. If we do not, we risk allowing the making of monsters, and we risk becoming monsters. And we risk being so deluded by the supposed goodness of our intentions that we do not realize the Brave New World we are making, until it is too late.

—*William Kristol*

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The Pigs Return to the Trough

Farm subsidies are back, bigger than ever.

BY FRED BARNES

THE WHITE HOUSE veto of the farm bill was bold and defiant, reflecting the strength and confidence of the president. The bill not only costs too much and imposes too many government controls, he said, but it's also filled with "so much that would be detrimental to farmers," their future would be put in jeopardy. "It would do harm to every agricultural region of the country," the president said, causing large surpluses. "Thus it fails to meet the test of being good for farmers and fair to all our people." Too bad this veto message didn't come from President Bush last week when he instead signed the bloated new farm bill. No, those words were President Eisenhower's as he vetoed the Agricultural Act of 1956.

At the last moment, Bush considered a veto. His aides checked with congressional Republicans to find out if the bill's price tag might be as much as $20 billion more than advertised. It's costly, but not *that* costly, the White House was told. And even if it were, it was too late for a veto, the president having signaled repeatedly that he'd sign the measure. So, with misgivings, Bush went along. Three times, he called the bill "generous," and he conceded "it's not a perfect bill." His weak explanation for signing it was: "There's no such thing as a perfect bill."

There's a lot more wrong with the bill Bush signed than a few imperfections. First, there's the money. Depending on whose projections you use, it will raise farm spending by $73 billion to $82 billion over 10 years. The bill's total cost is pegged at $457.8 billion, including $251.9 billion for food stamps. What's worse is the attitude of Congress and the White House toward the increased spending that the bill reveals. A war is on and there's again a huge deficit, yet Washington is back to its old ways, gorging on spending. The era in which big government was over is over.

AP / Wide World Photos

Onion farmers may be the most unlikely winners this year.

The bill not only increases spending for most existing crop subsidy programs, it brings back old ones that had been killed and even creates new ones. Remember the mohair subsidy, which became famous because one of its recipients was newsman Sam Donaldson of ABC? It was eliminated in the Freedom to Farm Act of 1996, which was supposed to wean farmers off subsidies altogether, but didn't. Well, the mohair subsidy is back, along with the previously killed wool subsidy, thanks to the chairman (Larry Combest) and ranking Democratic member (Charles Stenholm) of the House Agricultural Committee, both from Texas. And thanks to the efforts of Democratic senator Kent Conrad of North Dakota, the honey subsidy has also risen from the dead.

Is it crucial to America for these products to be federally subsidized? Of course not. Yet what's alarming is how easily these subsidies were revived. The standard wasn't whether they are necessary. Obviously they aren't. It was whether the subsidies could be slipped into the farm bill, one way or another, while everyone is distracted by the war on terrorism. This is the old way of doing business in Washington: Feather your own nest—that is, your district or state—with as much of the taxpayers' money as you can get your hands on. This practice, dormant for a spell, is now back in full flower.

Republicans are almost as guilty as Democrats. For instance, they used the farm bill to present a gift to Ben Gilman, former chairman of the House International Relations Com-

Fred Barnes is executive editor of THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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The Big Lie (I)

Are the "occupied territories" really occupied territories?

As Adolf Hitler discovered, the Big Lie will eventually be accepted as the truth. The Big Lie, the monster whopper of our time, is that the provinces of Judea/Samaria, often called the "West Bank" are "occupied territories."

What are the facts?

A Brief History: Most of the area now called the Middle East was part of the Ottoman (Turkish) Empire before World War I. Germany lost the war and so did its ally Turkey. The Ottoman Empire ceased to exist and the League of Nations assigned Britain and France as the mandatory powers.

France assumed mandatory control over what is now Syria and Lebanon. Britain assumed mandatory control over all the rest, including "Palestine," which comprised all that is now Jordan and Israel, including the "West Bank." The Golan Heights, which Syria now claims as its age-old patrimony, was originally part of Palestine.

> "The Big Lie of Israel's 'occupation' has been repeated so long and so often that even people of good faith have come to believe it and to accept it."

In 1917, the British issued the Balfour Declaration, under which Palestine was to be a homeland for the Jewish people. In 1921, Winston Churchill, who was then Colonial Secretary of Great Britain, separated all the land east of the Jordan River from the territory designated to be the Jewish homeland, and awarded it to the Hashemites, who established the kingdom of Transjordan.

The Arabs, whipped up by their fanatic clergy, fiercely opposed the presence of the Jews on what they considered "sacred Moslem territory." There was constant warfare between the two groups, which the British tried to arbitrate, always favoring the Arabs, whom they considered more important to their imperial interests.

In 1947, the British decided that they had enough and resigned the Mandate. They left the Arab-Jewish antagonists to their own devices and turned it over to the United Nations. Their solution was to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state. The area west of the Jordan River (the "West Bank") and the Gaza Strip were allotted to the Arabs. Jerusalem was to be an "international" zone. After much soul searching, the Jews accepted the partition and, in April 1948, declared their independence in the area allotted to them by the partition. The Arabs rejected the partition out of hand. On the very day of Israel's birth, five Arab armies invaded the nascent Jewish State. In what must be considered an almost Biblical miracle, the ragtag Jewish forces decisively defeated the combined Arab might. But Israel had suffered enormous casualties – 6,000 dead, about one per cent of its population.

Israel not an "occupier": Israel stayed in control of most of the area west of the Jordan River, except for the Gaza Strip, which stayed under Egyptian control. The "West Bank" and the eastern part of Jerusalem stayed under the control of Transjordan, which promptly renamed itself Jordan and proceeded to ruthlessly expel all Jews and to obliterate all vestiges of over 2,000 years of Jewish presence in that land.

In the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel recovered the "West Bank," the eastern part of Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, conquered Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, and conquered and annexed the Golan Heights. During the 19 years that Jordan and Egypt were in possession of the "West Bank" and the Gaza Strip, it didn't occur to them or to anybody else that the Palestinians should have a state or even that they were a distinct nationality. The claim for that did not arise until after the Six Day War.

Jews have been living in Judea/Samaria since Biblical times. The area was made *judenrein* (free of Jews), following the Nazi model, by Jordan, when it was in possession of the territory. After 1967, Jews moved back into the territory and a great hullabaloo was raised and is still being raised about the not more than 200,000 "settlers," who do not occupy more than 2 per cent of the area. But there is no concern about the hundreds of thousands of Arabs, who, lured by the prosperity of Israel, have flooded into the area, nor of the more than one million Arabs who live in Israel proper and who enjoy full rights of citizenship.

Israel acquired the territories (the "West Bank" and Gaza) in defense of an aggressive war waged against it. No country in history has ever been asked to return such territories. Do the Poles return the huge chunk of Germany that they acquired in the wake of World War II? Do the Czechs return the Sudetenland, do the French return Alsace-Lorraine? Of course not! Only Israel is being asked to return such territories. The last sovereign of the "West Bank" and of Gaza were the Ottomans. The "West Bank" and Gaza are unallocated territories. To speak of Israel as "occupier" is preposterous; to speak of it, as Kofi Annan, the Secretary General of the UN does, as "illegal occupiers," is poisonous slander. He knows better. But unfortunately, the Big Lie of Israel's "occupation" has been repeated so long and so often that even people of good faith have come to believe it and to accept it.

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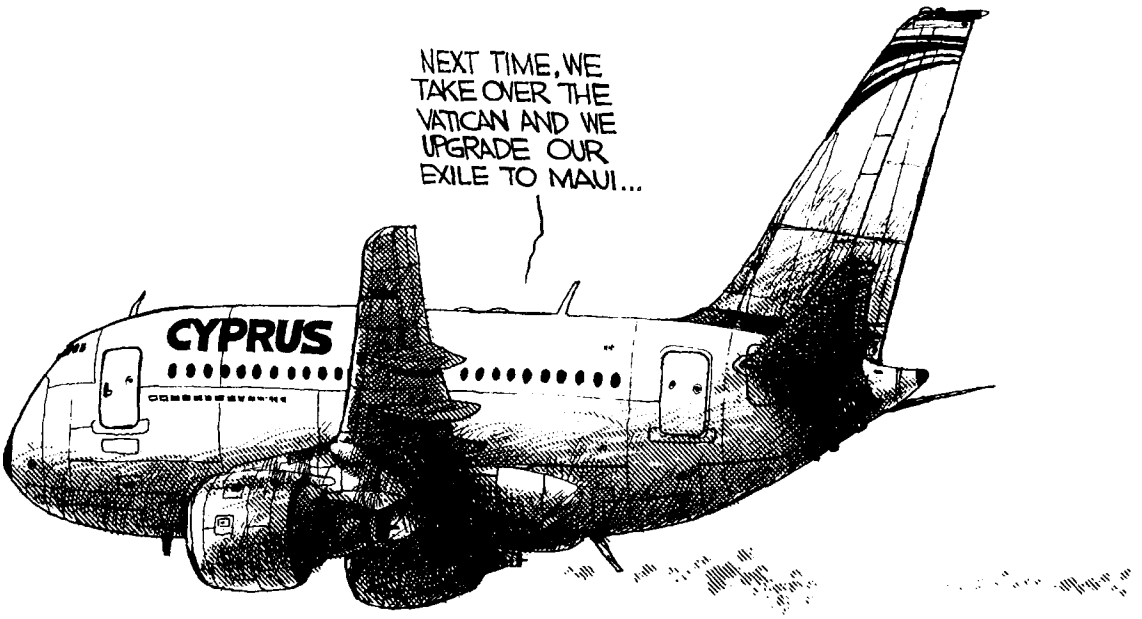
mittee, who's retiring. Onion growers in his upstate New York district have been clamoring for federal aid for years, and so has Gilman. The farm bill provides a subsidy. Gilman was duly appreciative. "This measure enables us to finally deliver the needed $10 million in federal assistance to our Orange County onion farmers, who have suffered year after year," he said. Gilman is a capable congressman and a nice man. But should the farm bill be a vehicle for gifts?

The onion program is not the only new one. Conrad was the key player in bringing about a subsidy for "pulse" crops—you know, chickpeas, lentils, and dry peas. A subsidy for those is designed to encourage farmers to rotate their crops. Crop rotation is a good agricultural practice. But hasn't it been done for eons without a subsidy from Washington? Must farmers really be prodded at taxpayers' expense?

To no one's shock, the farm bill is blatantly political. As Richard E. Cohen and Corine Hegland noted in the *National Journal*, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle made sure Democratic senators up for reelection this year were helped. Max Cleland of Georgia got a bigger-than-ever peanut subsidy. Tim Johnson of South Dakota wanted something called "country-of-origin" labeling on products—and got it. Tom Harkin, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, got a big, fat farm bill to brag about back in Iowa.

What about President Bush? He could have kept the farm bill from becoming egregiously larded. Citing new economic circumstances, he could have called for a little belt-tightening. It was back in spring 2001 when Congress authorized the $73 billion increase in farm spending. At the time, the budget surplus was $5 trillion and no annual deficits were in sight. The economic slump changed things. By late 2001, the surplus had shrunk dramatically and deficits were foreseen. True, the White House complained about House and Senate farm bills as they were being drafted, saying they cost too much and didn't meet the White House's free-market standards. But Bush could have insisted Congress trim the $73 billion hike and not add programs.

Against a good bit of evidence, Bush and his aides assert the Freedom to Farm bill with its market-oriented approach has not been reversed by the new farm bill. At last week's signing ceremony, Bush said supplemental farm bills won't have to be enacted every year, as was the case after 1996. The new bill, he said, "is generous enough to eliminate the need for supplemental support later this year and in the future." We'll see. The question is whether farmers and their allies in Washington have been sated or whether their appetites have merely been whetted. The answer, more likely than not, is whetted. ♦



Michael Ramirez

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Short-Circuiting Justice

The Sixth Circuit custom-designs a majority for affirmative action. BY DOV B. FISCHER

IN *GRUTTER* V. *BOLLINGER*, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati last week upheld racial and ethnic preferences in admissions to the University of Michigan Law School. Liberals are celebrating a rare victory for affirmative action in the courts. However, the more profound impact of *Grutter* may lie in the manipulation of the court to achieve this outcome, exposed by some of the dissenting judges.

Thus, along with his dissent, Judge Danny J. Boggs filed an unusual "Procedural Appendix," which he deemed "important [to] be placed in the record as an explanation of the manner in which this case came before the particular decision-making body that now decided it." First in December, then again last week, the case was reviewed by panels whose composition was determined by political machinations.

Under the rules of the 6th Circuit, cases are normally heard by three-judge panels, to which members of the court are randomly assigned. For *Grutter*, however, Chief Judge Boyce Martin, a Jimmy Carter appointee, assigned himself to the panel.

A party who loses before the randomly selected panel may seek "en banc" review, by all the judges on the court. The *Grutter* parties, Boggs explained, submitted a request for en banc review on May 14, 2001. At the time, 11 judges were active in the circuit. Mysteriously, the request was not circulated to all the judges. Three months later, after 2 conservative judges had taken "senior status" and retired from active duty, the balance of the court shifted. Only then was the petition for en banc review circulated to everyone.

Thus, the court that decided *Grutter* on a 5-4 split last week was distinctly different from the one that would have heard it if the en banc request had not been initially concealed. As Judge Alice Batchelder wrote in her separate dissent, "Public confidence in this court or any other is premised on the certainty that the court follows the rules in every case, regardless of the question that a particular case presents. Unless we expose to public view our failures to follow the court's established procedures, our claim to legitimacy is illegitimate."

Dov B. Fischer, an attorney and political affairs commentator, clerked for the Hon. Danny J. Boggs on the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in 1993-94.

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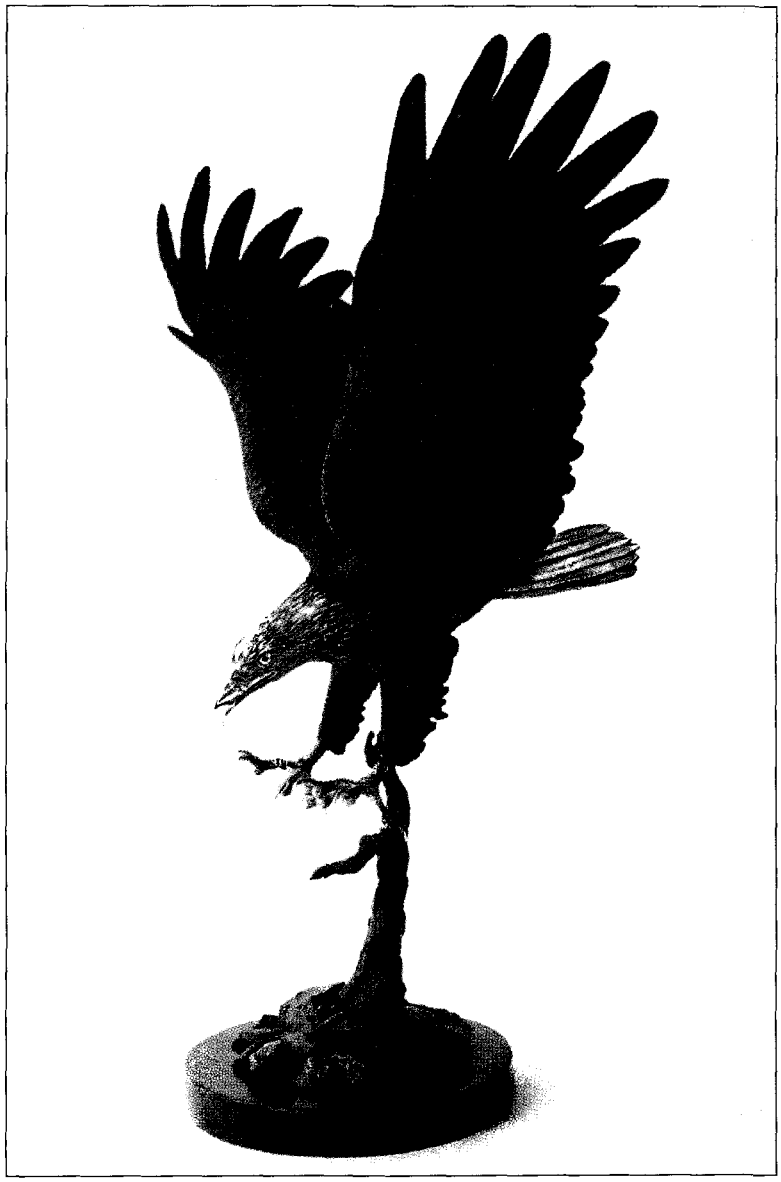

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The larger political background here is the deadlock in confirming federal judges in Washington. Normally the 6th Circuit has 16 judges. Right now, 8 seats are vacant (one of the 9 judges ruling in *Grutter* also took "senior status" in December 2001). Bush has sent the names of 7 nominees to the Senate, but not one has been confirmed thanks to the Democrats' stall.

As the 6th Circuit has shrunk in half, political chicanery has set in, of which the Michigan affirmative action case is not the sole example. In *In re John W. Byrd, Jr.*, a convicted murderer, sentenced to be executed, sought post-conviction relief. After the court denied a habeas corpus petition challenging his conviction, he sought leave to file a second such petition. Last October, the 6th Circuit remanded his case "for the development of a factual record sufficient to permit sua sponte consideration of a request for leave to file a second petition for a writ of habeas corpus."

In doing this, the majority usurped the district court's fact-finding authority. According to Judge Boggs's dissent, "under the statutes, we are simply not authorized to do anything with a motion to file a second or successive petition other than to grant it or deny it." Terming the majority's action "lawless"—a description also adopted by fellow dissenter Judge Richard Suhrheinrich—Boggs observed, "This activity has spun so far out of the authorized sequence that it may even be doubted whether the Supreme Court may be thought to have jurisdiction to stay it at this point."

At the height of the presidential butterfly-ballot and chad controversy in late 2000, the nation's confidence in the judiciary was sorely tested. Now, a year and a half later, the Senate's cynical logjam in approving judicial nominations is encouraging jurists to manipulate calendars and engage in other procedural shenanigans that are beneath them and that can only further damage the honor of the courts. ♦

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Friedman's Follies

All the peace-processing that's fit to print.

BY MARTIN KROSSEL

THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN'S *New York Times* column of last February 17 reads like a bad B-movie script. Finding himself in Saudi Arabia on a press trip, Friedman explains he "took the opportunity" of a dinner with Crown Prince Abdullah to try out on the crown prince an idea he had floated in an earlier column. What if the 22-member Arab League proposed a Middle East peace plan offering Israel diplomatic relations, normalized trade, and security guarantees in exchange for a total Israeli military withdrawal from the territories captured in the 1967 Six Day War? Friedman characterized this as "full withdrawal, in accord with U.N. Resolution 242, for full peace between Israel and the entire Arab world."

An astonished Abdullah responded, "Have you broken into my desk? . . . This is exactly the idea I had in mind. . . . I have drafted a speech along those lines. My thinking was to deliver it before the Arab summit, and try to mobilize the entire Arab world behind it. . . . I tell you if I were to pick up the phone now and ask someone to read you the speech, you will find it virtually identical to what you are talking about. I wanted to find a way to make clear to the Israeli people that the Arabs don't reject or despise them."

This piece of theater was scripted to disguise the fact that the crown prince had intended all along to have Friedman make his proposal public. Abdullah wanted a PR coup in light of September 11, which had tarnished Saudi Arabia's image. He got his wish. After Friedman wrote his column, the "peace plan" took on a life of its own. It was praised by statesmen and journalists; and it got the crown prince a summit meeting with President Bush.

Thomas Friedman has a knack for influencing both public debate and the words and actions of statesmen. Back in 1990, it was he who suggested to James Baker, then secretary of state, that Baker insult Israel by publicly declaring, "Everybody over there should know what the [White House] telephone is: 1-202-456-1414. When you're serious about peace, call us." Now, all these years later, his idea for inserting a NATO force between Israelis and Palestinians has picked up support inside the Beltway.

Friedman is a media star. "Tom's Journal" is now an occasional feature on PBS's *NewsHour With Jim Lehrer.* Friedman is a favorite foreign policy wonk of talk-show hosts from Charlie Rose to Don Imus. He recently won his third Pulitzer Prize, and he has received the National Book Award. His books *From Beirut to Jerusalem* and *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* are required reading on Friedman's favorite subjects, the Arab-Israeli conflict and globalization.

Why is Friedman so influential? Certainly people listen to anyone who writes for the world's most prestigious newspaper. But there is more to Friedman's stardom. Reacting to the Saudi peace plan column, *New York* magazine's media critic Michael Wolff described Friedman as "a Hollywood character—Mr. Smith goes to Riyadh. . . . He's naturally anti-intellectual. In a sense, he's anti-*Times*. He's evangelical."

Especially in his books, Friedman shows brilliant storytelling and reporting ability. He is a master of the quip and the cute turn of phrase. He can make arms control entertaining. His earthy language seems engaging on radio and television. But Fried-

Martin Krossel is a freelance writer living in New York.

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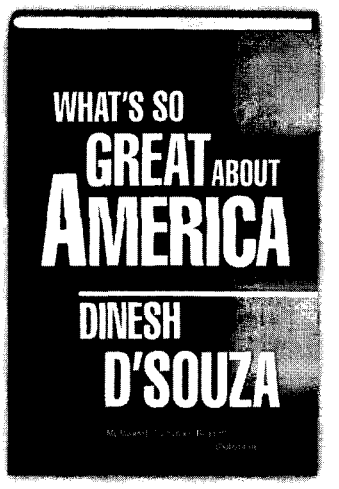

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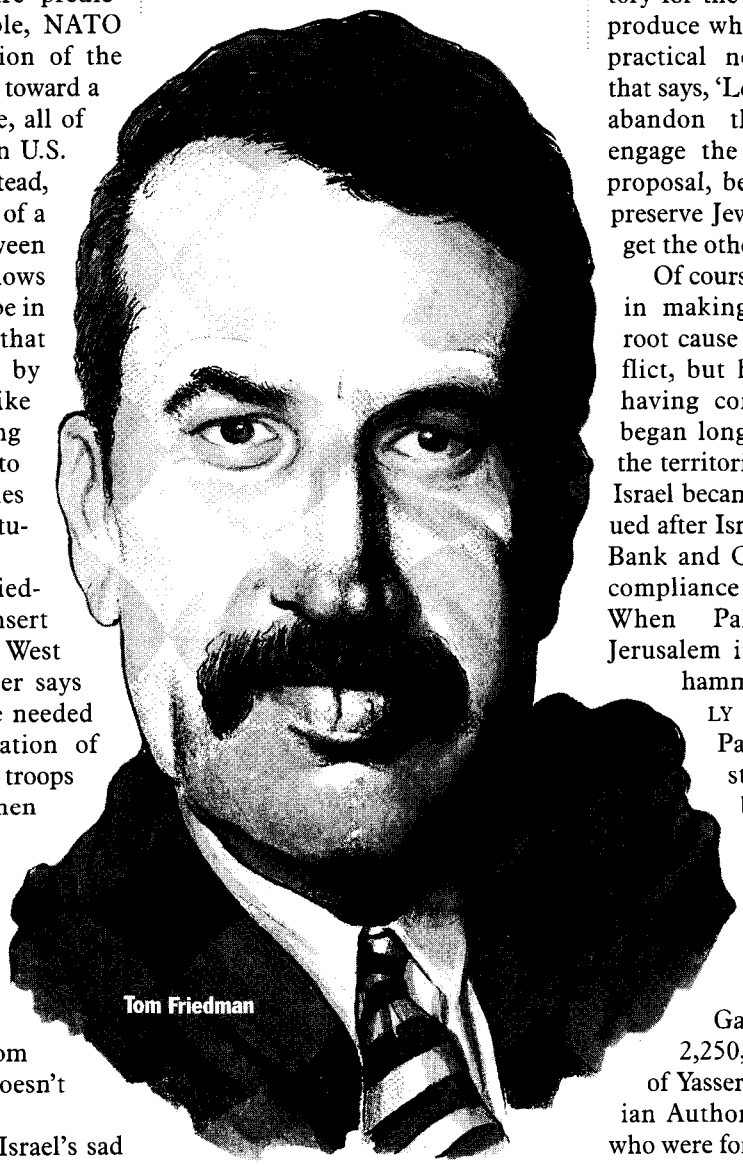
man is also popular on the talk-show circuit precisely because he rarely breaks from the views of the *Times* or expresses an opinion outside the journalistic mainstream.

Of course, being "anti-intellectual" has its hazards. It can make a columnist superficial—and wrong. So it is that events keep failing to bear out Friedman's dire predictions—about, for example, NATO expansion, U.S. abrogation of the ABM treaty, and progress toward a National Missile Defense, all of which he said would ruin U.S. relations with Russia. Instead, last week's establishment of a new partnership between NATO and Russia shows U.S.-Russian relations to be in fine shape. So it is, too, that Friedman, undeterred by experience in places like China, goes on preaching globalization as a means to force authoritarian regimes to create democratic institutions.

Similarly glib is Friedman's proposal to insert NATO troops into the West Bank and Gaza. He never says how many troops will be needed to stop terrorist infiltration of Israel or what exactly the troops are supposed to do. When Israelis are attacked, will the NATO soldiers emulate the recent Israeli incursion into the West Bank, going house to house to arrest terror suspects? Or will they prevent Israel from retaliating? Friedman doesn't say.

Nor does he consider Israel's sad history with international forces. Before 1967, a United Nations force was supposed to prevent war between Israel and Egypt. But when, on the eve of the Six Day War, Egyptian president Nasser decided to attack Israel, he simply ordered the U.N. force to leave. It obeyed, and Egypt's attack proceeded unobstructed. Israelis are understandably reluctant to entrust their security to a foreign force.

Friedman is often critical of Arab leaders and Arab societies, but Israel is his main villain in the Middle East. For the most part, he draws little distinction between the region's only democracy and its authoritarian or totalitarian adversaries—except when arguing that Israel cannot stay Jewish and democratic while holding on to the West Bank and Gaza. And Friedman is clear: The chief obstacles to peace are Israel's refusal to withdraw from the territories and its unwillingness to dismantle Jewish settlements there.


Tom Friedman

His wrath has thus been directed at successive Likud leaders, Menachem Begin, Benjamin Netanyahu, and Ariel Sharon. In his April 24 column, Friedman wrote, "Mr. Sharon is so paralyzed by his obsession of eliminating Mr. Arafat, by his commitment to colonial settlements and by his fear that any Israeli concession now would be interpreted as victory for the other side, that he can't produce what most Israelis want: a practical non-ideological solution that says, 'Let's pull back to this line, abandon these settlements, and engage the Palestinians with this proposal, because that is what will preserve Jewish democracy, and forget the other stuff.'"

Of course, Friedman is not alone in making the "occupation" the root cause of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but he is no less wrong for having company. Arab terrorism began long before Israel occupied the territories, and even long before Israel became a state. And it continued after Israel turned over the West Bank and Gaza to Yasser Arafat in compliance with the Oslo Accords. When Palestinians rioted in Jerusalem in 1997, Charles Krauthammer wrote in THE WEEKLY STANDARD, "Those Palestinians throwing stones and hurling firebombs are not living under occupation. The single most misunderstood fact about the Middle East today is that, of the 2,300,000 Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank, 2,250,000 live under the rule of Yasser Arafat and the Palestinian Authority. Of the Palestinians who were formerly under Israeli rule, 98 percent now live under Palestinian rule."

For all practical purposes, the Palestinian Authority until recently had most of the attributes of statehood. A Palestinian police force maintained order. The Palestinians ran, and still run, their own schools, media outlets, and social institutions. The worldwide outcry against

Illustration by Drew Friedman

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the recent incursion is proof that the international community admits Palestinian de facto sovereignty. Israel's promise to withdraw shows that it too effectively recognizes this.

By pretending that the Israeli occupation continued under Oslo, journalists like Friedman helped create the misunderstanding Krauthammer decried. The pundits have told us for decades that Palestinian sovereignty is the key to resolving the conflict. However, Palestinian violence targeting Israeli civilians increased markedly after Oslo. Suicide bombings, for instance, are a new phenomenon. How many Israelis would have joined Friedman in supporting Oslo in 1993 if he had told them that it would increase Palestinian violence? How could anyone who knows how wrong Friedman was about Oslo ever trust his prognostications again?

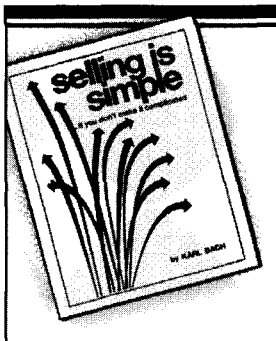
It is true that, in some of his columns, Friedman comes close to conceding that the Palestinians and the larger Arab world are mostly responsible for the ongoing troubles. In early March, for instance, he admitted being puzzled by the intensity of Muslim rage against Israel. When large numbers of Muslims die at the hands of Saddam Hussein or in sectarian violence in India, the reaction in the Muslim media is muted. "Yet when Israel kills a dozen Muslims, in a war in which Muslims are also killing Jews," Friedman noted, "it inflames the entire Muslim world."

He saw the paradox as rooted in the "contrast between Islam's self-perception as the most ideal expression of the world's three great monotheistic religions . . . and the conditions of poverty, repression, and underdevelopment in which most Muslims live today." An American diplomat told Friedman that Israel—not Iraq or India—reminds Muslims of their own powerlessness. "How could a tiny Jewish state amass such military and economic power, if the Islamic way of life—not Christianity or Judaism—is God's most ideal religious path?"

Lately, Friedman seems to have become more sympathetic to Israel's security concerns. Since the suicide bombings began, he has been tougher on Arafat than many other pundits. He holds Arafat responsible for much of the violence of the last 18 months. He chastises Arafat for failing to prepare the Palestinians for a "historic compromise with Israel" and having no plans for running a Palestinian state. In recent weeks, Friedman was supportive of Israel's military actions in the West Bank, and he was silent on the most controversial aspects of the operation such as Jenin and the standoff at the Church of the Nativity.

But Friedman still refrains from asking whether the 1967 borders the Saudi peace plan demands are in fact defensible. Friedman similarly ignores the potential strategic significance of the Jewish settlements on the West Bank. He never acknowledges that, wherever its permanent borders are set, Israel might need to maintain a defensive line along the Jordan River to prevent another Arab army from joining with the Palestinians to attack Israel.

True to form, after a telethon in Crown Prince Abdullah's kingdom openly raised money for suicide bombers, Friedman neglected to ask whether a country that shows such enmity toward Jews and Israel is really interested in peace with the Jewish state. Friedman told Charlie Rose that his purpose in serving as Abdullah's mouthpiece was "maybe bringing a glimmer of hope to this Arab-Israeli thing." Bringing hope is what ministers and preachers do. For analysts, it often encourages wishful thinking and ignoring of inconvenient facts. And that's what is found all too often in Tom Friedman's prize spot on the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. ♦



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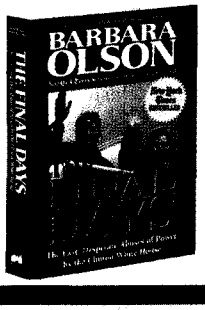

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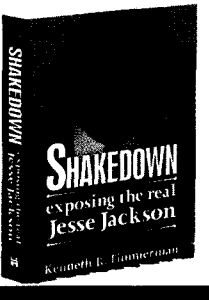

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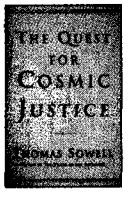

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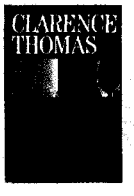

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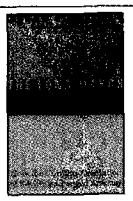

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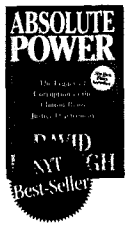

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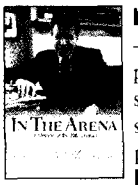

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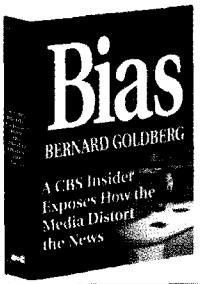

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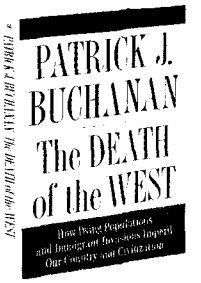

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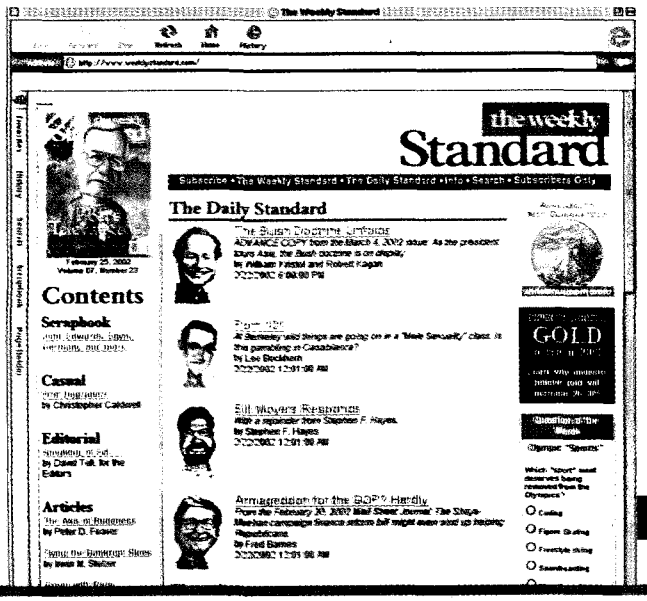

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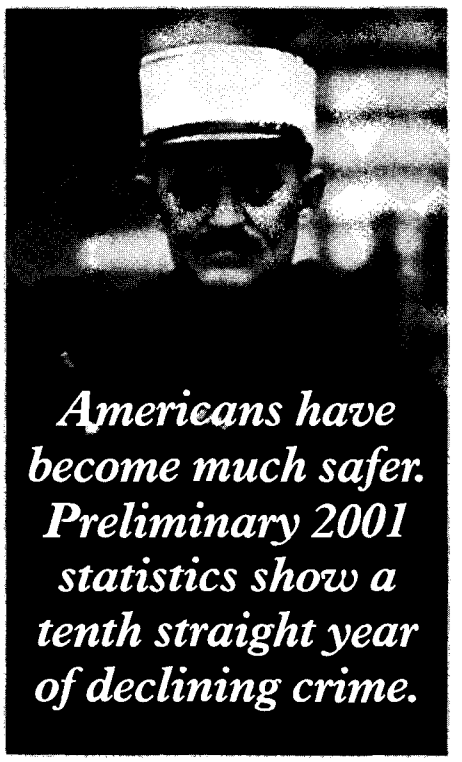
Crime Without Punishment

As American streets get safer, crime in Europe soars.

By Eli Lehrer

After he beat an 80-year-old grandmother, took a mother with a stroller hostage, and robbed 11 London banks in broad daylight, Michael Wheatley was finally nabbed by British police late last month. Dubbed the Skull Cracker for his habit of pistol-whipping victims, Wheatley had transfixed the London tabloid press with a series of dramatic, violent crimes. Scared Londoners, however, had more to worry about than just the Skull Cracker: In April alone, one gang used a battering ram to steal $14,500 of merchandise from a jewelry store near the city's commercial center, another took to ramming cars into storefronts, and teenage thugs robbed pedestrians of their mobile phones all over the city. Last year, London saw more serious assaults, armed robberies, and car thefts than New York; 2002 could see London's murder rate exceed the Big Apple's.

The same pattern can be seen throughout Europe—indeed, in much of the developed world. Crime has recently hit record highs in Paris, Madrid, Stockholm, Amsterdam, Toronto, and a host of other major cities. In a 2001 study, the British Home Office (the equivalent of the U.S. Department of Justice) found violent and property crime increased in the late 1990s in every wealthy country except the United States. American property crime rates have been lower than those in Britain, Canada, and France since the early 1990s, and violent crime rates throughout the E.U., Australia, and Canada have recently begun to equal and even surpass those in the United States. Even Sweden, once the epitome of cosmopolitan socialist prosperity, now has a crime victimization rate 20 percent higher than the United States.



Americans, on the other hand, have become much safer. Preliminary 2001 crime statistics from the FBI show America's tenth consecutive year of declines in crime. While our homicide rate is still substantially higher than most in Europe, it has sunk to levels unseen here since the early 1960s. And overall crime rates in this country are now 40 percent below the all-time highs of the early 1970s. In 1973, nearly 60 percent of American households fell victim to property crimes. In 2000 (the most recent data available), only about 20 percent did. Among the economically powerful democracies in the Group of Seven, only the Japanese now have a lower victimization rate than the United States.

So why have America's streets become safer even as crime has exploded in Europe? Many commonly cited explanations don't hold water: America's falling population of males in their teens and early 20s helped reduce crime in the early 1990s, but crime continued to fall even as youth populations began to swell later in the decade. While the American Enterprise Institute's John Lott has shown that greater gun ownership reduces crime, this deterrent effect can't explain more than a small part of America's recent success. It's now easier to carry concealed weapons in some parts of the coun-

Eli Lehrer is a senior editor at the American Enterprise *and co-author with Edwin Meese of a forthcoming book,* Revolution in Blue: Seven Principles of Community Policing.

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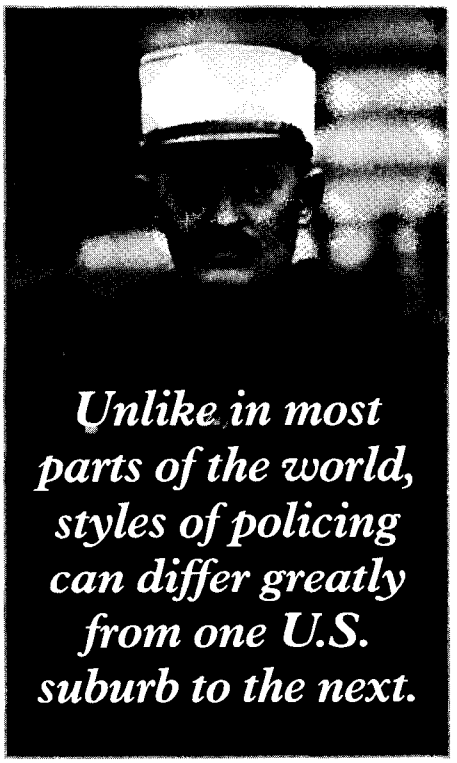
try, but Lott acknowledges that gun ownership levels are about the same as they were when crime hit its all-time highs in America 30 years ago. Third-world immigration, the bugbear of the European right, may drive crime rates up, but violence and theft have also spiked in countries that let in few immigrants.

There is, in fact, a simple explanation for America's success against crime: The American justice system now does a better job of catching criminals and locking them up. But why are America's police agencies performing better than their counterparts elsewhere in the developed world?

Local control may be a critical difference. America has local police departments—think Sheriff Andy Griffith and Deputy Barney Fife—while massive regional or national agencies provide almost all of the law enforcement in nearly all of the other industrialized countries. With about 16,500 police agencies—over 2,000 of which employ only one officer—America's policing system might seem disorganized and amateurish at first glance. All of England has only 39 local police departments, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police run most of Canada's police agencies. France and a bevy of other nations have unified national police agencies. But when it comes to learning from mistakes and adapting to new circumstances, small organizations have their advantages.



While smart police chiefs have always tried to adapt styles of policing to the particularities of their communities, well-intentioned reform efforts during the American crime explosion led police agencies to discourage officers from making too much contact with citizens and community groups. This eventually sparked a backlash in the form of the "community policing" movement of the late 1980s, which began to encourage police officers and citizens to form crime-fighting partnerships. While some of those efforts were better at producing press releases than arrests, the movement overall has to be counted a success.

Today, styles and philosophies of policing can differ enormously in two suburbs of the same city that would share the same police department almost anywhere else in the developed world. In Simi Valley, a sleepy Ventura County suburb full of Los Angeles police officers and Ronald Reagan memorabilia (his library is there), police scatter kids who hang out in front of movie theaters and reprimand pedestrians who spit on the sidewalk. A jaunt down the 405 freeway in Long Beach, a sometimes chaotic, diverse city full of immigrants, police *encourage* so-called "positive loitering" by handing out stickers to well-behaved juveniles around parks, movie theaters, and schools. Spitting goes unnoticed. Both approaches work: Long Beach and Simi Valley have each reduced crime over a third since the mid-1990s.

American police departments can adapt more easily to their communities than their counterparts in the E.U. and elsewhere not only because they are smaller but because they need to respond to local elected leaders and voters. Police represent the largest or second largest spending program in nearly every city and town budget. Mayors, city council members, and voters keep close tabs on local police. As representatives of municipal government rather than agencies of a distant provincial council or the national government, successful American police chiefs shape their agencies to fit the desires and demands of local constituencies rather than distant bureaucrats.

In their quest to adapt to the needs of their communities, the best American police departments have created a culture of innovation. While a handful of larger police departments (New York, Chicago, and San Diego most prominently) do provide many new techniques and practices, at least as many successful innovations come from small and mid-sized police agencies, which centralization has eliminated in the rest of the developed world. Moreno Valley, Calif., police have developed a national model for fighting graffiti through rapid-response police-community partnerships; Minneapolis police have built the world's best computer system to monitor pawn shops for stolen goods; and Jacksonville, Fla., police could teach other agencies a few things about neighborhood renewal.

Relatively small American police departments also put more cops on the street. While conventional management theory suggests that administrative savings come from consolidation, larger departments tend to have more blue-uniformed bureaucrats and fewer crime fighters. Only about a third of France's 130,000 police officers, for example, work on the streets. As agencies get smaller, however,

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they send a greater percentage of their staff to work the streets: In Garden Grove, Calif.—which has one of the lowest police officer-citizen ratios of any American city—85 percent of officers work the streets in one way or another.

Larger agencies (including American ones) face an almost irresistible temptation to move the best officers onto specialized teams directed at particular types of crime or feel-good community involvement programs. While all police departments need some specialists—a green academy graduate can't substitute for a veteran homicide investigator—the most successful agencies keep such special assignments to a minimum. Lowell, Mass., the city with the largest crime decreases in the United States during the 1990s, eliminated nearly all of its special units. And other highly successful departments have followed suit, eliminating or restructuring their special task forces in order to assign more officers to patrol duty and answering citizens' calls.

Superior policing does little good without a commitment from the justice system to keep violent thugs off the streets. The United States has the longest prison sentences in the Western world. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics and its counterparts in other countries, a convicted armed robber can expect to serve about four and a half years behind bars in the United States, a little over two years in Great Britain, a bit less in Germany, and less than 18 months in France. The United States imprisons nearly 700 out of 100,000 citizens as compared to about 125 in the U.K. and Canada, 100 in Germany, and about 60 in most of Scandinavia. Some of these countries may actually have fewer thugs than the United States, but those left unpunished do enormous damage.

While building and staffing prisons costs a great deal, letting criminals

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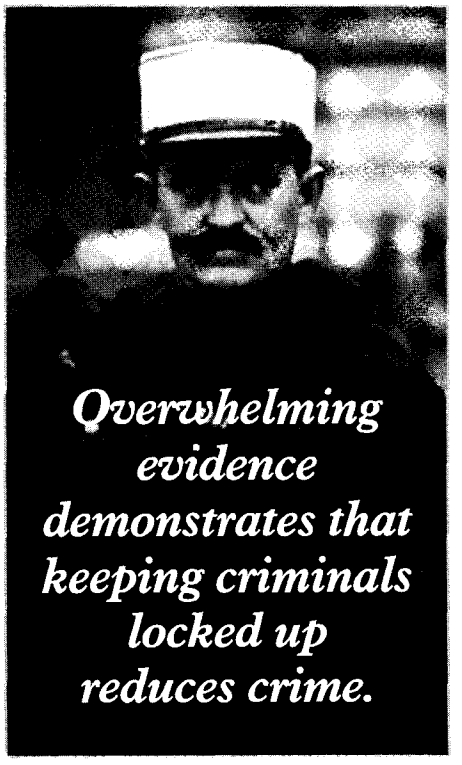
roam free costs even more. One violent criminal can do over a million dollars worth of damage in the space of a year. A single armed robbery costs society more than $50,000, and a hardened thug can commit a hundred such crimes in a year. The European elite still seems to regard Americans' desire to lock up violent criminals as an index of barbarism and America as a nation gripped by violence and infatuated with rough, frontier justice. With violence and theft exploding all over the developed world, however, one has to ask which type of society is barbaric—one that punishes criminals, or one that lets them prey on law-abiding citizens?

Not surprisingly, overwhelming evidence demonstrates that keeping criminals locked up reduces crime. British academic Donald E. Lewis's comprehensive 1986 examination of studies on the correlation between sentence length and crime rates (published in the *British Journal of Criminology*) concludes that doubling the length of the sentence for a crime will cut the likelihood that criminals will commit that crime by a little less than 50 percent. In a comprehensive comparison of crime rates in the United States and Great Britain, a Bureau of Justice Statistics researcher and the head of Cambridge University's Criminology Institute hit on the key fact: Crime rates fell in the United States as punishment increased and rose in Britain as punishment decreased. As James Q. Wilson has observed, "coincident with rising prison population there began in 1979-80 a steep reduction in the crime rate as reported by the victimization surveys."



America's criminal justice system has plenty of flaws. While nearly every other developed country has too few local police agencies, the United States has too many: More law enforcement agencies patrol Washington, D.C., (population 572,000) than all of the United Kingdom (population 59.6 million). And the crime picture isn't entirely copacetic: Although murder rates have fallen sharply in the United States even as they rise elsewhere, ours still remains second only to South Africa's among wealthy nations. While most murder victims have some connection to the drug trade or other organized crime, Americans also kill each other at high rates in their homes and streets. American law enforcers could learn a good deal from foreign police agencies when it comes to cracking down on the drug gangs that commit most murders, and should probably provide more funding for domestic abuse awareness programs and battered women's shelters. While keeping thugs locked up helps society, prison conditions remain abysmal: Black and white supremacist gangs run many correctional facilities, guards receive too little training, and male inmates face a constant threat of rape. Efforts to reintegrate prisoners into mainstream society, likewise, border on negligent. Per-inmate funding for rehabilitation has fallen steadily even as more people have gone to prison.

But there is still a lot that the rest of the world can learn from our experience, as problems that European sophisticates still view as uniquely American take root elsewhere. Even as the United States has replaced many of its worst housing projects with mixed-income townhouse developments, multi-family estates on the outskirts of London, Paris, and other European capitals have become at least as dangerous as their American counterparts were during the 1970s and 1980s. As welfare reform and a strong social message that crime does not pay push many former members of the American underclass into the workforce, an entrenched welfare culture grows in many European countries. Writing in the Fall 2001 *Public Interest*, Charles Murray noted that his predictions of a decade earlier about the emergence of a British underclass had come true. By the late 1990s, British levels of unemployment, family breakdown, and violent crime among the welfare underclass were the same or higher than were America's in the 1960s and 1970s.

Americans should not take too much satisfaction in our becoming a safer nation. While crime in America has declined rather spectacularly, it still stands well above the level of civic peace our grandparents enjoyed. But America has moved in the right direction while Europe has moved in the wrong one. The combination of engaged, community-oriented police and ample investment in incarceration is turning the United States into the safest large Western country. Europeans may want to emulate American policies—God forbid!—if they hope to win their own wars against crime. ♦

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"Forty Acres and a Lexus"

California governor Gray Davis weighs in on behalf of slave reparations.

By Debra J. Saunders

San Francisco

California is the last place that ought to be embroiled in the slave reparations controversy. Slavery was never legal in the state. There were no plantations. Its ports were not slave trade centers—wrong coast.

Nonetheless, California has become the first state to step into the reparations game. The legislature two years ago passed, and Democratic governor Gray Davis signed, a bill requiring insurers doing business in the state to provide information on any slave policies they or predecessor companies had issued. The state's imprimatur lends undeserved credibility to the long-shot effort by race demagogues to shake down corporations for damages incurred in pre-Civil War America.

On May 1, California's insurance commissioner, Harry Low, made public data from the Slavery Era Insurance Registry. Low's office noted that 92 percent of insurers complied with the measure—with most claiming they had no hard evidence of slave policies (some had conveniently destroyed old documents). Only 8 out of more than 1,300 insurers provided comprehensive answers. Aetna, for example, produced the first names of 16 slaves covered by policies payable to the slaveowners in the event of damage to or death of the slaves.

At an April 24 press conference with Jesse Jackson, Davis said the reparations law he signed was important, because "clearly we want to right any wrongs and do justice to people who were taken advantage of." Later, his staff tried to spin that statement into meaning that Davis supported the collection of information, but that he has no position on paying reparations. As Davis eyes reelection and then the White House, his staff is hoping America won't notice that he is now the highest-ranking elected official in America to take a stand in favor of reparations.

There are two schools of thought as to who should pay slave reparations. One school—the Reparations Coordinating Committee, which includes Harvard law professor Charles Ogletree, writer Cornel West, formerly at Harvard, and O.J. attorney Johnnie Cochran—wants the U.S. government to pay damages, since the American government for its first four score and seven years countenanced the insidious trade in human beings.

The other school believes that private entities—corporations, banks, and universities—that can be shown to have retained the profits of human bondage should disgorge them. It was with this in mind that then-state senator Tom Hayden drafted legislation in 2000 calling for a University of California colloquium "to draft a research proposal to analyze the economic benefit of slavery that accrued to owners and the businesses, including insurance companies and their subsidiaries, that received those benefits." Davis signed that measure, which Hayden had introduced as a companion to the insurance bill.

It seems unlikely that the state of California will use the slave registry information to levy any sort of fine against insurers, but that's not the problem. The slave registry has provided ammo to private litigants who are suing companies for damages. Reparations attorney Bruce Nagel told the *Boston Herald* that the California data provide "further proof that these companies were an integral part of the slave trade."

And proof is a useful commodity. In March, Nagel, Ed Fagan, and a small army of lawyers filed suit in federal court in Brooklyn against three named companies—Fleet Boston Financial Corporation, Aetna, and CSX—and one hundred "corporate (John) Does." The suit provided no specific sum for the damages of slavery, but the attorneys noted that the present value of the profits from slave labor amounts to $1.4 trillion. While the suit specified the three companies' background in the slave trade, it also noted that "all industries: raw market, retail, financial, insurance,

Debra J. Saunders is a columnist for the San Francisco Chronicle.

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and transportation, benefited from the reduced costs of slave-produced goods." Thus any company in business before 1865, or that bought a business that operated while slavery was legal, is liable in the eyes of reparations advocates.

Aetna provides a good example of why insurers might not want to bare all before the California Insurance Commissioner. Activist Deadria Farmer-Paellmann first approached Aetna to ask the company if it had sold any slave policies. Aetna historians checked, verified those few policies, and the company apologized for this stain on its past. Later Farmer-Paellmann became a major plaintiff in the Brooklyn reparations suit.

On May 1, Richard E. Barber—a grandson of slaves—filed suit against three other companies, including New York Life Insurance. New York Life admitted issuing slave policies but told the California insurance commissioner that after two years of selling slave policies, its trustees had voted to end the sale of all such policies in 1848.

When California released the slave data, the story could have been a poignant reminder about the inhumanity of slavery. It is a sobering lesson in American history to read through the lists of souls known only by their first names, whose identities were compressed into John, steam boat fireman, or Bella, house servant, policy number (s)615-1316.

But in the context of reparations litigation, newspapers concentrated on slave descendants who hoped to track down their ancestors, mindful of the potential for a payment. "Everybody hopes that it's going to be one of their ancestors on that list," the president of the California African American Genealogical Society told a reporter.

What these seekers probably don't realize is, first, that under existing liability law, none of these lawsuits has a prayer of succeeding. But of course, facing sufficient bad publicity, some corporations might want to settle. Then will come another rude awakening for those whose ancestors were enslaved: The private reparations lawsuit in Brooklyn doesn't seek to award damages to actual slave descendants. Newspapers don't understand that either. They repeatedly refer to reparations as a movement to make the government or companies "pay damages to slaves' descendants" (to cite the *Philadelphia Inquirer*).

Wrong. As Jesse Jackson told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, reparations "will not be, 'Rowena, pick up your check at the register.'" The documentation is simply too thin. And if it were possible to track down descendants, the payout would be too small. It wouldn't be worth a lawyer's time to track down the 40 descendants of a slave once covered by a $300 premium.

And so Fagan's lawsuit, as well as groups that champion reparations to African Americans, supports payment of damages to—groups that champion African Americans. As writer Earl Ofari Hutchinson explained in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, forcing insurers that profited from slavery to pump money into AIDS/HIV education, remedial education, and job training would "help the black poor, not tap taxpayer dollars, and finger all whites as culpable for slavery." Not dead, slave-owning whites, or some whites, but "all whites."

And it still wouldn't be enough to wipe the slate clean. The term "reparations," after all, implies that payment for slave profits would repair the damage of slavery. But if African Americans deserve compensation for their ancestors' enslavement, why would African Americans settle for someone else getting the money? Or as Eva Paterson of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "The high-road side of me says this should go to a fund of some kind. But another side says give me my money. As the saying goes: If not 40 acres and a mule, then 40 acres and a Lexus."

But wait, there's more. According to Jackson, the payment of reparations shouldn't end with African Americans. Chinese Americans have cause for grievance, as the "coolie" labor of their grandparents helped build the railroads. In fact, Manhattan Life volunteered to Harry Low that it had "insured shippers for their cargo of 700 Chinese coolies on a journey from China in 1854." So it's probably only a matter of time before Chinese-American reparations lawsuits are filed. Ditto Mexican Americans who worked for substandard wages because they lacked citizenship.

You might think that Gray Davis's GOP challenger Bill Simon would be railing against Davis until his voice goes hoarse for Davis's role in promoting this Great American Shakedown. One day Simon could address the concept of holding companies accountable for crimes committed more than a century ago—or, rather, for legal but immoral long-ago deeds. Because of course the scandal of the slave insurance policies is that the law countenanced them—one more reason the lawsuits are just grandstanding. The next day Simon could explain how these bills might chase businesses out of California. And then perhaps he might ask how the millions of African Americans who today are employed by and own stock in these insurance companies will benefit from the shakedown.

Camp Simon has been slow to see the issue's significance. At first the Simon campaign refused to give a statement on reparations. More recently, Simon strategist Jeff Flint has said that the reparations bills provide "another example of Gray Davis failing to do anything for the African American, so he's trying to make up for that by pandering to Jesse Jackson." That was the best he could do.

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Then again, he was following the Dubya playbook. When asked about reparations, White House spokesman Ari Fleischer responds, "The president does not weigh in on any matters in the private sector involving litigants."

And yet, far from being a matter in the private sector, the injustice of slavery is an issue of the profoundest national importance. And the deep understanding of most Americans is that reparations were paid in the years 1861-1865, although there remained plenty to atone for thereafter. Today's political leaders may want to dodge the topic, but they could do worse than to cite Abraham Lincoln, who eloquently confronted the issue of reparations in his Second Inaugural address: "Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away," Lincoln said. "Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondsman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn by the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

Today the Bush and Simon teams clearly do not understand what average voters feel in their bones and what Davis aides themselves know all too well: Reparations is the ultimate wedge issue. Reparations cut to the very core of what is just and unjust. If the state sanctions suits designed to, as Earl Ofari Hutchinson said, "finger all whites"; if it doesn't matter that working people and their immigrant parents had to scrape and sacrifice for everything they have; if it doesn't matter that over 100,000 Union soldiers died in battle and millions of other Americans sacrificed and suffered to end slavery; if California can punish individuals for what their long-dead ancestors did somewhere else; and if a group of lawyers and demagogues can win government-sanctioned retribution for crimes committed a century or more ago—then Sacramento might as well be Palestine and California might as well be Bosnia.

If California agencies or California courts punish companies for distant crimes, they will be penalizing hard-working shareholders, consumers, and workers for sins they abhor, never committed, and never had an opportunity to stop. To punish innocent people in the name of justice would be a travesty. ♦

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The Mystery of Craig Rice

By Jon L. Breen

January 28, 1946, cover of *Time*, TIMEPIX

In 1946 Craig Rice, a female novelist with a masculine-sounding name, became the first writer of detective fiction to make the cover of *Time* magazine. Her hardcover sales figures matched those of her bestselling contemporaries Rex Stout, Ellery Queen, Erle Stanley Gardner, and Raymond Chandler. The poet and mystery buff Louis Untermeyer found in her "a composite of Agatha Christie's ingenuity, Dashiell Hammett's speed, and Dorothy Sayers's wit."

But where Christie and Hammett and Sayers—and Stout, Queen, Gardner, and Chandler—are still widely known, Rice has slipped into obscurity: her life and even her name forgotten, her books long out of print. You can, however, get a taste of what she was capable of in *Murder, Mystery, and Malone*, a new short-story collection edited by Jeffrey Marks—who is also the author of *Who Was That Lady?*, a biography of Rice published last year.

When she died in 1957, a physical and mental ruin at the age of forty-nine, Rice had been in steep decline both personally and professionally for more than a decade. Her death was proclaimed a mystery, but no more so than many aspects of her life: her true name, the number and order of her marriages, the causes of her self-destructive behavior, and even the authorship of some of the books and stories credited to her. But the biggest mystery may be how a writer of such enormous critical and commercial success fell into such complete eclipse.

Murder, Mystery, and Malone
by Craig Rice
Crippen & Landru, 196 pp., $27

Marks's *Who Was That Lady?* provides much of the information necessary to solve these mysteries. Unfortunately, its dreadful prose is rich in non sequiturs and dangling modifiers. From a missing foreword to an index in which the page citations bear no relation to the book, the failure of editing is appalling. Still, nothing more thorough and authoritative is likely to appear.

Rice was born Georgiana Craig in 1908, the neglected daughter of a pair of expatriate artists. Reared by her father's half-sister and her husband, she added their surname Rice when they formally adopted her in 1921.

Her first marriage in 1927 resulted in two children. Divorced in 1931, she gave birth to a third child out of wedlock in 1932. She published poetry and crime reportage during the 1930s before finding her niche in mysteries. Following a creative burst in the first half of the 1940s, her mental and physical health declined through abusive marriages, financial reversals, suicide attempts, and institutionalization for chronic alcoholism. According to Marks, she was an undiagnosed manic-depressive.

Rice was a person of great charm, humor, and personal magnetism who won and then strained the loyalty of her (mostly male) friends. The agent

The winner of two Edgar awards, Jon L. Breen is the author of six mystery novels and writes the "Jury Box" column in Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine.

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Scott Meredith assigned her, during one low period, to write short stories in his New York office for eight hours a day, paying her when the work was done. The wealthy collector Ned Guyman hosted one of her weddings and bailed her out financially again and again before he finally lost patience. Her sometime collaborator Stuart Palmer produced, under their joint byline, stories to which she made little contribution. Frederic Dannay (one of the pair of writers who wrote under the name "Ellery Queen" and the editor of *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*) encouraged her and published her stories when he could.

Rice's first novel, *8 Faces at 3*, appeared in 1939 and was followed by ten more comic mysteries about a trio of hard-drinking Chicagoans: show-biz hustler Jake Justus, madcap heiress Helene Brand (later Mrs. Justus), and criminal defense attorney John J. Malone. She produced three books in a similar farcical vein about a pair of street photographers named Bingo Riggs and Handsome Kuzak: *The Sunday Pigeon Murders* (1942), *The Thursday Turkey Murders* (1943), and *The April Robin Murders* (1958), a posthumous volume completed by Ed McBain. Under the pseudonym Michael Venning, she wrote three straight-faced and atmospheric novels about a very soft-boiled private eye named Melville Fairr. She also published several novels that did not concern series characters, three under her own name and a fourth as Daphne Sanders.

Her fame at the time was primarily based on the Malone and Justus series. While Jake and Helene are straight from screwball comedy's central casting, their lawyer friend Malone is an inspired creation, whose deductive brilliance, malaprop speech, diminutive stature, rumpled appearance, fiscal imprudence, and Irish romanticism still work well—while the Justuses have become tiresome excess baggage.

As an unapologetic champion of the defense bar, Malone is closer in spirit to John Mortimer's Rumpole of the Bailey than to his contemporary, Erle

Craig Rice

Delph: Books

Stanley Gardner's Perry Mason, whose clients are always innocent. Malone (never actually seen in court) is a defender of the guilty whose contempt for society outstrips his contempt for criminals. He frequently offers his services as lawyer to the murderer he has just exposed. In *The Corpse Steps Out* (1940), his theory of detection is expressed in a variation on the familiar Sherlock Holmes dictum, "It's been my experience that while impossible things happen frequently, improbable ones never do." Malone's malapropisms usually involve mixed metaphors or scrambled aphorisms ("that would be allowing the long arm of coincidence to bend its elbow a little too much"; "Never change horses, . . . even if they're about to lay golden eggs").

The continuing characters include an unconventional police contact. Captain Daniel von Flanagan (he added the "von" on his own somewhat confused initiative, in order to sound less like a cop) never wanted to be a policeman, certainly never wanted to be a detective, absolutely didn't want to be in charge of homicide, and regards every murder as a personal affront. Over the years, he daydreams of other careers: mink breeder, pecan farmer, actor, undertaker, small-town newspaper editor, dude ranch operator. Meanwhile, the friendly but subtly menacing mob boss Max Hook is a Jabba the Hutt whose constant changes of interior decoration styles are a running joke.

Rice's narrative usually begins with a bizarre and inexplicable situation. In *8 Faces at 3* the heroine awakens to find her aunt dead and all the clocks in the house stopped at 3 o'clock. In *The Big Midget Murders* (1942) a midget nightclub performer is found hanged in his dressing room—strangled by eleven stockings, all of different sizes. In *The Lucky Stiff* (1945) a convicted murderess, who has been pardoned just before her scheduled execution, blackmails the warden to let the world think she died—allowing her to operate as a ghost haunting her enemies. In *The Fourth Postman* (1948) three letter carriers have been murdered trying to make a delivery to the same address. In *My Kingdom for a Hearse* (1957) a famous model is really a composite, the hands, feet, face, voice, and other features all belonging to different women—and it appears someone is murdering them and parceling up the severed parts.

Rice reportedly wrote her novels at manic speed, with no outline and no idea of how the story would end. Still, she usually respected the rules of fair play and provided ample clues for a reader sharing her off-center logic to solve the mystery.

The single most famous Rice title does not feature any of her serial characters. In *Home Sweet Homicide* (1944), which became a 1946 film with Randolph Scott and Lynn Bari, Marian Carstairs is a widowed mystery writer raising three precocious children (ages ten to fourteen) alone. Mischievous but as angelically well-intentioned as the television version of Dennis the Menace, the children involve themselves in a neighborhood murder case while former crime reporter Marian obliviously writes away upstairs. Though she has

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nothing to do with the investigation, the kids see she gets the credit, while encouraging her romance with the investigating cop. The characters are clearly based on Rice and her children—considerably idealized. Neglected but benignly so, self-sufficient, and in many ways their mother's keeper, these fantasy kids give their mother a book on parenting as a present. The plot incorporates a negligible puzzle lacking fair-play clues, stoked by farcical complications and willful confusion of the case. The novel has some charm but too much of the flavor of a radio mystery—or the B-movie it became.

Rice was involved in ghostwriting, probably on both sides. Today it's common for celebrities from politics, show business, and sports to sign their names to mystery novels, virtually all of which are the work of phantom pros, some credited as collaborators or in an acknowledgment, others a closely guarded secret. But the practice was uncommon when Gypsy Rose Lee's bestselling *The G-String Murders* appeared in 1941, accompanied by a publicity campaign insisting the celebrated stripper wrote it backstage between peelings.

Rice claimed to have written both *The G-String Murders* and Lee's subsequent *Mother Finds a Body* (1942), and reference sources have long credited her with them. But at least two other contemporaries apparently also claimed to be Lee's ghost (leading Jeffrey Marks to the unlikely conclusion that the burlesque star wrote the novels herself). There is no question Rice ghostwrote the first novel of actor George Sanders, *Crime on My Hands* (1944), with its dedication "To Craig Rice, without whom this book would not be possible," but she farmed some of the work out to sub-ghost Cleve Cartmill.

During her period of peak productivity, Rice's husband was Lawrence Lipton, a Communist, poet, novelist, and Beat Generation apologist. In the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*'s 1983 entry on the Beats, the article on Lipton (written, in a surprising bit of scholarly incest, by his later wife Nettie Lipton) flatly states that he "coauthored twenty-two books . . . under the pseudonym Craig Rice." In the course of their acrimonious divorce, Lipton claimed a share of Rice's royalties. Snidely depicted in the *Time* article, Lipton is a major villain of Marks's biography, portrayed as a physically abusive husband who lived off his wife's earnings while proclaiming his own superiority as a serious literary figure. Even more fiscally irresponsible than Rice herself, Lipton failed to file the couple's income tax returns in two peak earning years.

Lipton may have been unbearable, but Marks's implication that he was also a lousy writer is off the mark. As boring and irrelevant as his bohemian pals may seem today, the Lawrence Lipton who wrote the Beat Generation survey *The Holy Barbarians* (1959) was a graceful, lively, insightful, and sometimes funny writer. The alcoholic (or marijuanic) atmosphere of his jazz-juiced nonfiction is not that far from the milieu of Malone and the Justuses. This does not mean he was in fact Rice's collaborator. Maybe the editing and proofreading he did for her taught him something.

Delphi Books

Rice's children: Iris, David, and Nancy.

Rice's agent Scott Meredith was known to procure ghostwriters for clients who were greedy, over-extended, or dead, and it is likely some of the magazine stories attributed to Rice at her low point in the early 1950s were the work of others. Certainly the "newly discovered" posthumous Rice novel *But the Doctor Died* (1967) must have been ghosted—besides lacking Rice's trademark comic style, it fit too conveniently with the spy craze of the 1960s.

Rumors of ghostwriting never help posthumous reputations, but there are other reasons Rice has suffered such a decline. Humor often has a limited shelf life, and just as some of the lesser screwball movie comedies haven't aged well, much screwball mystery fiction hasn't either. Rice's comedy is sometimes hilarious but at other times forced and strained.

By the standards of the current mystery market, Rice falls between two stools: her milieu (big city, gangsters, night clubs) is hard-boiled, but her sensibility is cozy, albeit a coziness fueled by alcohol rather than tea. Though Malone and the Justuses live in a dangerous world, nothing truly bad or painful ever happens to them. In the end, order is always restored, and the characters never suffer or develop in any meaningful way. The current market demands real, often excessive and repeated trauma, even for characters in so-called cozy mystery fiction.

The incessant heavy drinking of Rice's characters, almost equally prevalent in many of her American contemporaries, is equally out of favor: Drunks just aren't as funny as they used to be. Then, too, there's been a turn against criminal advocates. Lawyer mysteries continue to sell, but Malone's anything-for-a-client attitude may seem distasteful to today's readers.

Nonetheless, Craig Rice's work still has real pleasures—especially for the sort of reader who enjoys old *Thin Man* movies. The short stories are the best place to start. In some respects, they hold up better than the novels, delivering the endearing character of Malone and the wild plotting touches but sparing the reader the padding of the later

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novels. The best of them include the frequently anthologized minor classic "His Heart Could Break." *Murder, Mystery, and Malone*, with introduction and story notes by Marks, contains a good range of Rice's writing with and without Malone as the central character. (The book's publisher, Crippen & Landru, is a small house that deserves applause for its determination to collect worthy writers past and present.)

As for the novels, the best are the earlier ones. No one whose first Rice was *The Fourth Postman*, with its forced comedy, strained puns, and laggardly pace, would be likely to try another. The final pair, *My Kingdom for a Hearse* and *Knocked for a Loop* (1957), are closer to top form, though they are weakened by their expansion from magazine novellas and the obligatory addition of Jake and Helene. All of the Malone and Justus books through *The Lucky Stiff* have their attractions. *The Wrong Murder* (1940) and *The Right Murder* (1941) are a free-standing but linked duo that foreshadow today's trend (regrettable, I think) toward serial mystery novels. The two best may be those that leave the usual Chicago locale: *Trial by Fury* (1941), set in a small Wisconsin town, and *Having Wonderful Crime* (1943), in New York.

Marks ends his biography *Who Was That Lady?* by asking whether Rice, if she could have been treated for her bipolar condition with the medicines now available, would still have been able to produce the wild humor of her books.

He's spotted the often-observed relation of creativity and mental illness, but there's another common phenomenon: the frequent correlation of humor and personal unhappiness. Rice's contemporary Norbert Davis, for example—a less prolific but perhaps even funnier practitioner of screwball mysteries, whose two 1943 novels *The Mouse in the Mountain* and *Sally's in the Alley* have been reprinted recently by Rue Morgue Press—died a suicide at age forty in 1949. Craig Rice was a funny lady, a good writer undeservedly forgotten, a classic mystery author, and a deeply unhappy woman. She's worth remembering. ♦

The Buckley Party

The success—and failure—of New York's conservatives. **BY VINCENT J. CANNATO**

The battlefield of American politics is littered with the corpses of defeated third parties. Occasionally, such parties might sway the outcome of a presidential race, but mostly they live their all-too-short political lives in vain. It's true that our electoral system makes it difficult for these minor parties, but they are often their own worst enemies. The roster of third parties is filled with kooks, demagogues, extremists, egomaniacs, and naive dreamers. And their shelf life is depressingly short.

Fighting the Good Fight
A History of the New York Conservative Party 1962-2002
by George J. Marlin
St. Augustine's, 434 pp., $28

All this makes the history of the New York Conservative party seem all the more exceptional. Arguably one of the most influential third parties of the twentieth century, it has never fielded a candidate on the national level. But by concentrating on one state, it found itself on the cutting edge of American politics, a precursor to great changes that would sweep the entire country.

Now, for the fortieth anniversary of the party's founding, George J. Marlin has written a sympathetic history, *Fighting the Good Fight*. Marlin grew up with the Conservative party. As a Brooklyn teenager, he campaigned for Bill Buckley during his 1965 mayoral campaign. Almost thirty years later, Marlin himself was the Conservative candidate for mayor of New York and he still remains active in the party.

To Marlin, the rise of the Conservative party is as much a story of ethnicity and class as it is of political ideology. The New Yorkers Marlin writes about are mostly working-class and middle-class Irish, Italian, and German Catholics; their opponents largely upper-class and upper-middle-class Protestants—the dreaded "goo-goos" and "blue bloods." Variously called Reagan Democrats, blue-collar Catholics, or white ethnics, these conservative New Yorkers had grown angry and disillusioned with liberalism by the 1960s.

But the revolt of the white ethnics goes back to the mid-nineteenth century, when Irish immigrants clashed with native-born Protestants on the streets of New York and Thomas Nast's infamous cartoons portrayed the Irish as apes. By the turn of the century, Southern and Eastern European immigrants coming through Ellis Island took their place beside the Irish on the list of undesirables. Many Americans from the "responsible classes" feared that these immigrant hordes—"beaten men from beaten races," according to the then-president of MIT—would overrun Anglo-Saxon society. Eugenics became fashionable. Protestant elites supported Margaret Sanger's birth control movement, fearing "race suicide" if large immigrant families continued to grow unchecked.

The battle continued as Al Smith, the great Democratic hero-martyr of 1928, grew disillusioned with Franklin Roosevelt and his liberal New Dealers. Long dismissed as the rantings of a bitter old politician, Smith's criticisms were actually a precursor of the complaints of the Reagan Democrats years later. By the 1950s, many Catholic Democrats no longer felt comfortable in a Democratic party increasingly run by liberal, college-educated, upper-

Vincent J. Cannato is the author of The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York.

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middle-class reformers who worshipped Adlai Stevenson and ridiculed machine politicians. They also found liberal elites insufficiently tough on communism.

The trouble was that the Republican party in the northeastern states, run by people like the Rockefellers and the Lodges, was little better. So a pair of Irish Catholic lawyers in their thirties, Dan Mahoney and Kieran O'Doherty, decided to shake up New York politics and create the Conservative party in 1962. The party served as a voice for staunch anti-communism and for opposition to the big-government welfare state, which were being ignored by both major parties.

The party's appeal was largely to those "street-corner conservatives" of the old ethnic neighborhoods. The founding of the New York Conservative party was thus the culmination of more than a century of battles between progressive elites and working-class, traditionally minded Catholics. In Marlin's words, "the heirs of Al Smith's common man and F.D.R.'s forgotten man became members of Richard Nixon's silent majority and Ronald Reagan's moral majority."

Still, the party attracted an unusually diverse array of candidates and supporters over the years. One of the earliest party members was Charles Edison, a former New Dealer, Democratic governor of New Jersey, and son of the inventor Thomas A. Edison. Another was a suburban housewife named Barbara Keating who had lost her husband in Vietnam and was outraged by the antiwar attitudes of her children's public-school teachers. (Keating won 16 percent of the vote against Jacob Javits in the 1974 Senate race.) Then there was the 1977 New York mayoral candidate Barry Farber, a Jewish conservative talk radio host who spoke with a southern accent and was proficient in a dozen languages.

But by far the most prominent Conservative politicians were the Buckley brothers. William F. Buckley put the Conservative party on the map when he ran for mayor of New York in 1965. With characteristic style and wit, he made the case for what was then considered an exotic political philosophy. He argued for a restoration of law and order, welfare reform, lower taxes, less government spending, and an end to school busing. He won 13 percent of the vote running against an unimpressive machine Democrat named Abe Beame and the golden boy of liberal Republican politics, John Lindsay.

Bettmann / CORBIS

James Buckley's 1970 victory in the race for senator from New York.

The deeper the divisions in the country, the more successful the Conservative party became. Enrollment increased tenfold during the 1960s. Conservative party leaders gained influence by offering their party's line on the ballot to favored candidates and withholding it from Republicans deemed too liberal—with the consequence that those liberal Republicans sometimes found themselves on the losing end of a three-way race. Soon, a new breed of politician began popping up in New York with the letters "RC" following their names. (There was even the occasional "DC.") Some wags joked that the letters stood as much for the politicians' religion (Roman Catholic) as for their political affiliation (Republican-Conservative).

Although the party's most famous candidate was William F. Buckley, its most successful candidate was his quieter brother, James. Taking time out from running the family oil business, Jim Buckley stood as the Conservative party candidate for Senate in 1970. It was the year of Kent State and the hardhats riots on Wall Street, as well as the year that New York passed the nation's most liberal abortion law. Getting not-so-secret support from the Nixon administration and public endorsements from many New York Republicans, Jim Buckley rode the anger of the "street-corner conservatives" to victory by winning 40 percent of the vote in a three-way race. Buckley lost his reelection bid in 1976, but the man who beat him—Daniel Patrick Moynihan—was himself an Irish Catholic from a working-class background who made a name for himself as one of the first voices warning about the dangers of out-of-wedlock births in the black community.

More political success came in 1980, when a scrappy local politician from Nassau County named Al D'Amato defeated liberal Republican stalwart Senator Jacob Javits in the Republican primary. He then went on to defeat Javits (running on the Liberal party line) and Democrat Liz Holtzman in the general election. D'Amato's margin of victory came from the Conservative and Right-to-Life party lines.

By the 1980s, Ronald Reagan was setting the national agenda, and anti-communism, tax cuts, welfare reform, and traditional values were now a respectable part of the political

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debate. In New York, the Conservative party had amassed a decent political track record. It had helped elect two senators, a handful of congressmen (including Jack Kemp, Gerald Solomon, and Guy Molinari), and scores of state legislators and local officials. It even managed to get a conservative Democrat elected mayor of Buffalo.

Yet one goal remained elusive: New York's governorship. The Conservative party's archenemy Nelson Rockefeller dominated state politics in the 1960s and early 1970s. The 1980s brought another villain: Mario Cuomo. Though he began his career as a pro-life Queens lawyer who ran for mayor in 1977 on the "Neighborhood Preservation party" line, Cuomo soon became the darling of liberal Democrats and a vocal critic of Reaganism.

At home, he repeatedly stymied Republicans and Conservatives at the ballot box and in the state legislature. But his luck finally ran out in 1994 when a little-known state senator named George Pataki, whose sudden rise to power was aided by New York Conservatives, ousted him. The margin of victory, as with so many other political races in New York, came from the Conservative party line. D'Amato and Pataki now had complete control of the state Republican party and they offered the Conservatives a seat at the table. Conservatives were involved in Pataki's transition team, and some received political jobs. (Kieran Mahoney, the son and nephew of the Conservative party's founders, became a top Pataki adviser.) Marlin himself became head of the Port Authority.

Success, though, has turned out to be a problem for the Conservative party. Marlin writes that for conservatives, "the most difficult realization is that many in government have little interest in implementing sound reform policies, preferring instead to hold on to power for its own sake." He soon became frustrated by the "tyranny of the status quo" at the Port Authority, unable to move its lethargic bureaucracy toward much-needed reforms. Looking back on his experience, he writes: "Sometimes being in the winner's circle is not all it is cracked up to be."

Those may be fitting words for the Conservative party as a whole. Today, the Conservative party finds itself faced with a Republican party that takes conservatives for granted. First D'Amato and then Pataki trimmed their conservative political sails in order to survive in an increasingly liberal New York. Pataki has pandered to Puerto Rican voters on the issue of the Navy base at Vieques and cozied up to left-wing labor leader Dennis Rivera. He has also jettisoned his pro-life views. In his days in the state senate, Pataki made a name as the lone Republican vote against the Cuomo budget deals, but he now produces budgets that would make even Nelson Rockefeller blush.

Bettmann/CORBIS

James Buckley, Ronald Reagan, Barry Goldwater, and William F. Buckley in 1975.

Because of their close alliance with Pataki, though, Conservatives have had difficulty criticizing Republican excesses. Rudy Giuliani, however, is another story. As many conservatives across the country cheer the New York City success story, New York Conservatives are silent at best. Giuliani's views on abortion and gay rights made him anathema to the Conservative party. His endorsement of Mario Cuomo in 1994 sealed his fate.

Giuliani did push ideas that had been dear to the political right: reducing crime, reforming welfare, and rolling back some taxes. The result was a city on the road to recovery after forty troubled years. Yet the Conservatives still have not forgiven Giuliani's apostasy. Marlin, for instance, lashes out at him as a liberal McGovern Democrat and a fake street-corner conservative because the Giuliani family left Brooklyn for the "high-rent" district of Garden City, Long Island, in the 1950s.

The Conservative party's troubles with Giuliani and its acceptance of the D'Amato-Pataki Republican party have led to an identity crisis. Reasonable observers can ask whether there is a future for the party. The city's white ethnic neighborhoods, long a backbone of the party, are graying and shrinking. New York is now home to scores of new immigrants—Koreans, Chinese, Dominicans, Russians, Pakistanis—whose beliefs and needs are very different from those of older ethnics. The old villains—Nelson Rockefeller, John Lindsay, Jacob Javits, Mario Cuomo—are gone. New York's suburbs are becoming more liberal and the state as a whole is trending even more Democratic. The Nassau County Republican machine that nurtured politicians such as D'Amato is in tatters.

Marlin acknowledges these problems, but is still bullish about the party's future. Maybe he's right. As his *Fighting the Good Fight* shows, it has always been a little too easy to count the Conservatives out. For forty years they have shown an uncanny knack for proving their critics wrong. In 1962, Jacob Javits called the Conservative party "freakish," "crackpot," and "wholly out of step with the twentieth-century." Forty years later, despite the ups and downs of political life, those Conservatives have the last laugh. ♦

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The Terror of Islam

John Esposito struggles to sanitize Islamic thought. BY STANLEY KURTZ

Osama bin Laden may be hunkered down, half-starved in some Pakistani village right now, yet he continues to sow considerable confusion among America's leftist academics.

Take, for example, John L. Esposito, founding director of Georgetown University's Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, past president of the Middle East Studies Association, and foreign-affairs analyst for the Bureau of Intelligence and Research at President Clinton's State Department. Within the academy, Esposito is widely considered to be a leading American scholar of Islam. Yet even as al Qaeda agents were crashing passenger planes into the Pentagon and World Trade Center, an article by Esposito (in *The Fletcher Forum*) deriding American intelligence officers for their preoccupation with Osama bin Laden was sitting on newsstands.

Unholy War
Terror in the Name of Islam
by John L. Esposito
Oxford University Press, 196 pp., $25

So the events of September 11 represent a political and intellectual crisis for Esposito, who has long championed the view that the Islamic threat is phony or exaggerated: The West has falsely and prejudicially portrayed Muslims as radically other, the problems of the Islamic world are a legacy of Western colonial domination, and Muslim terrorism, however regrettable, is best understood as a reaction to America's one-sided support for Israel and the sanctions America has so cruelly imposed upon the people of Iraq.

There were dissenting voices, of course, in the academic world, and since September 11, the universe of Middle Eastern scholarship has been turned on its head. Bernard Lewis, ostracized and excoriated for years by his leftist colleagues, is now perched on the bestseller list, while Samuel P. Huntington, no less put upon than Lewis by the postmodern academy, is lionized for his prediction of a "clash of civilizations." Meanwhile, the once dominant leftist professoriate is shunned and derided by the press and the public for its knee-jerk anti-Americanism.

It has fallen to John Esposito to strike back on behalf of a beleaguered academy. With the publication of *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam*, Esposito seeks to breathe new life into his failed paradigm. However belatedly, Esposito now means to acknowledge and describe the reality of Islamic terrorism, while nonetheless disassociating such extremism from Islamic religion and society as a whole. And having thus dealt with the terrorism conundrum, Esposito hopes to firmly reestablish his basic claim that the roots of Islamic terror lie in the arrogance, error, and prejudice of America's foreign policy in the Middle East.

This is a difficult dance, and the author trips over himself from the start. Esposito once mocked those who perceived a threat from militant Islam, deriding them as cold warriors desperately in search of a new enemy. Yet today, he freely speaks of "the threat of Islamic radicalism to our stability and security." The man who once taunted American intelligence officers for their obsession with Osama bin Laden now begins his book with a chapter on the master terrorist himself. It's sad to see Esposito bemoan the paucity of good information on bin Laden's early life—for no one more than Esposito himself has stood in the way of research on the subject of Osama bin Laden.

A more interesting reversal is Esposito's partial abandonment of his objections to generalizations about Islam. Before September 11, Esposito rejected even the term "Islamic fundamentalism." That label, he said, conjures up the picture of a monolithic menace, even as it indiscriminately lumps American allies, like the governments of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, with anti-American extremists like al Qaeda. Yet it turns out that nasty old essentializing label told the truth after all: Esposito spends a considerable amount of *Unholy War* detailing the role of the Saudi and Pakistani governments in spreading the movement that he now freely calls Islamic "fundamentalism."

One would like simply to forgive Esposito his postmodern past and welcome the belated onset of good sense. But the problem with *Unholy War* is that Esposito tries to get by with minimal concessions to the new political environment, without either revising his fundamental intellectual framework or acknowledging the contradiction between the new stance and the old. The result is a book of thunderous conceptual silence. The chapter on bin Laden, for example, amounts to little more than a compilation of press reports with little analysis of either bin Laden or his followers. It isn't simply a question of Esposito's reluctance to play to anti-Islamic prejudice through too close a focus on an extremist. Esposito's dilemma is that almost anything he chooses to say about Islamic terrorism undercuts his own intellectual framework and confirms the account of his scholarly rivals.

Thus *Unholy War* often goes to war against itself. In one place, it condemns the Taliban's imposition of Islamic law on Afghanistan. In another, it defends those who seek to impose strict Islamic law as though they were exponents of democratic self-government. Although Esposito promises that a careful examination of the tradition of jihad will permit us to distinguish between extrem-

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ists and the vast majority of Muslims, nearly everything in the book seems to point in the opposite direction. Esposito appears to admit this when he plaintively asks why bin Laden's calls for jihad "resonate as truth for mainstream Muslims as well as for extremists."

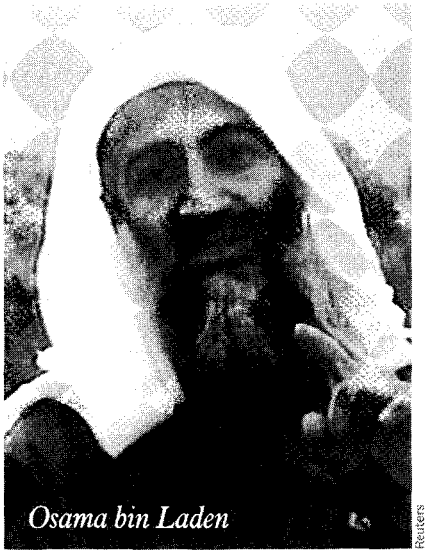
What Esposito's guided tour of jihad actually shows is that violent and radical sects characteristically emerge within Islam during periods of social crisis. Esposito hastens to remind us that such sects are eventually marginalized and rejected by the mainstream. Yet we live in the short and medium term. It may take decades for the current terrorist revival to be tamed and repudiated on the model of its historic predecessors.

In the meantime, bin Laden and his followers are simply acting out a well-established part within Islamic tradition. *Unholy War* labels bin Laden an "unholy warrior," but it's clear from Esposito's own retelling of Muslim history that at numerous points in the past, even mainstream Islam has interpreted Koranic restrictions on war to permit just about any violence.

Esposito makes a point of repudiating the notion that the terrorists' anti-Americanism can be attributed to "irrationality, ingratitude, jealousy of our success or hatred for 'our way of life.'" This is Esposito's swipe at Bernard Lewis, who has long maintained that Islamic fundamentalists have made a scapegoat of the West for the Middle East's own troubles. Esposito wants to argue that Muslim anti-Americanism is grounded in well-reasoned objections to our foreign policy. Yet by the time he makes this point, he has already spent several chapters impugning the terrorists as "emotive" and "rigid" ideologues repulsed by American culture.

As a longtime advocate of liberal reform within Islam, Esposito is hardly in a position suddenly to change into a theological strict constructionist. So instead, he paints bin Laden as a clever manipulator. By co-opting grievances against America shared by the larger Muslim world, Osama is said to have seduced a moderate public into supporting his violent jihad. But, given the widespread Muslim belief that the Israeli Mossad actually brought down the World Trade Center (on a day when Jews were supposedly warned to stay home from work), why shouldn't we assume that blind hatred has by now gone mainstream in the Middle East?

Islam has no problem with capitalism per se, says Esposito. Many early Muslims were merchants, and nothing in Islamic teaching is opposed to trade or private property. Yet the real incompatibility between capitalism and Islamic culture is rooted in the family and kinship systems of Middle Eastern society, all of which are identified with and supported by Islam. The inveterate corruption of Middle Eastern bureaucracies (without family connections, it can take years just to get a telephone installed) is tied to the kinship structure, and Esposito has nothing whatever to say about the social correlates of contemporary Islam. For him, it suffices to lay Muslim society's problems at the door of colonial exploitation.


Osama bin Laden

Reuters

Yet in the absence of any substantial account of contemporary Islamic social structure, Esposito's arguments lose their force. To persuade us that Islam and modernization are compatible, for example, Esposito reminds us of the way we used to laugh at the "Made in Japan" label. If a traditional society like Japan can turn around and match us on the economic front, asks Esposito, why can't the Middle East? But that begs every important question. Japanese kinship is notably more flexible than the closed tribal organizations of the Islamic Middle East. There is every reason to believe some traditional societies adapt more easily to capitalism than others, and those differences are based on divergences of culture that Esposito will not allow himself to address.

Nonetheless, the argument about Japan is interesting because it exposes the contradiction in one of Esposito's favorite rhetorical strategies. After using his antiessentialist pickaxe to break apart any generalized concept like "Islamic fundamentalism" that appears to put the Middle East in a bad light, Esposito turns around and offers up a series of ridiculously overgeneralized cultural comparisons as apologetics for Islam. He points out, for example, that cultural and religious conservatives in the West, like Islamic fundamentalists, "question the excesses of modernity."

Yet Western conservatives also typically embrace the fundamentals of modernity: democracy, capitalism, religious freedom. Muslim fundamentalists don't just question the excesses of modernity, they try to blow modernity up. Equally outrageous is the moral equivalence Esposito likes to draw between Osama bin Laden and Samuel P. Huntington. Esposito never lets on that Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations*, so far from being an incitement to war, is actually a plea for cultural self-restraint.

Islamic society may still adapt itself to democracy and capitalism. Yet at this point, to ignore the incompatibility between Islam and modernity is willful blindness. It is no accident that Turkey's modernizing Kemalist movement, with its rejection of traditional religion, has no significant parallel in the Islamic world. Something about Islam seems to force a choice between modernity and tradition. For all his talk of diversity, everything about Esposito's work is dedicated to obscuring that central fact. ♦

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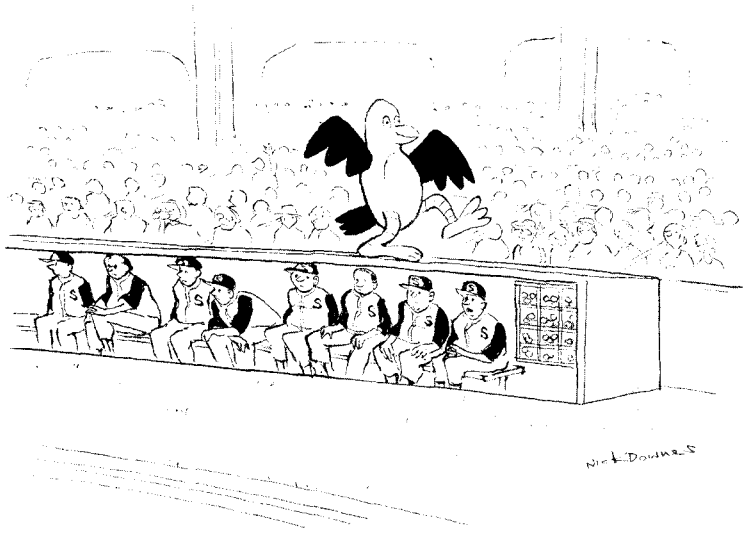

"Come to think of it, our troubles did begin with the arrival of the dancing albatross."

Books in Brief

***Women in the Barracks: The VMI Case and Equal Rights* by Philippa Strum (University Press of Kansas, 448 pp., $34.95).** Philippa Strum's *Women in the Barracks* is a tale of good versus evil. Including everything from sociological critiques of all-male military schools as "male bonding rituals" (which craft men solely on the basis of their "otherness" from women) to an enraging yet largely irrelevant narrative of Ruth Bader Ginsburg's struggles against sexism in her early career, Strum depicts Virginia Military Institute's integration as the culmination of a long battle by women against inequality everywhere.

She relies, to a great extent, on a general condemnation of sexism (and, for that matter, racism and slavery) to make her case, painting the old VMI as a bastion of all that is rotten in human history. Strum's account is sometimes interesting, as when she describes how Virginia politics shaped the early phases of the battle to integrate the school. Yet at its heart the book is sheer polemic: "Although *change* was a six-letter word to most people," she writes, "to the hard-nosed members of the VMI family, it packed all the emotion of a four-letter epithet." Indeed.

Under Title IX, VMI could possibly have remained all male and government funded, if the tunnel-visioned administration had not focused so totally on the notions of tradition and history at their own school—and thus done little to aid nearby Mary Baldwin College in creating a similar program for women.

But by comparing the rigors of VMI to the less-harsh systems at West Point and the other American service academies, Strum undercuts her own argument, simultaneously endorsing the right of women to this "unique" experience and decrying it as excessive, unnecessary, and sexist. *Women in the Barracks* has, of course, a happy ending: In a final chapter entitled "The Fife and the Drum, Together at Last," women carry the day, and thirty of them triumphantly matriculate.

For a book written five years after the integration, it is astonishing that Strum barely touches on the *actual* problems faced by VMI and its students as a result of the gender integration. But that, of course, would complicate what is otherwise a simple fairy tale.

—Erin Sheley

***The Hunter, The Hammer, and Heaven: Journeys to Three Worlds Gone Mad* by Robert Young Pelton (Lyons, 320 pp., $24.95).** It is best to check in with Robert Young Pelton before you visit your next war zone or humanitarian crisis. The author of *The World's Most Dangerous Places* does this for a living. Now, in *The Hunter, The Hammer, and Heaven*, Pelton takes readers through Sierra Leone, Chechnya, and Papua New Guinea—which are, he writes, "the three incubators of future wars, where money, technology, and outside ambition are brought to bear against internal social forces. Where the values of culture, life, and land are unrelated to the concepts of money, military power, or privilege.

Pelton is right that each of these represents an "asymmetrical conflict between nonstate players." The question is what we can learn from them, other than each conflict's peculiarities and individual history. The answer, unfortunately, is not forthcoming.

Still, read exclusively for the yarns, the book is fascinating. On the road Pelton hooks up with mercenaries, mujahedeen, international resource tycoons, and xenophobic South Pacific islanders. Even his experiences of waiting are funny, as Pelton has to navigate through the U.N. bureaucracy in Sierra Leone, obtain safe passage to Chechnya from gangsters, or wait out dreary days in the former Soviet republic of Georgia with his one-legged friend—all to get in to see forced amputations, Russian bombs, and the complete destruction of a tropical paradise.

Even without a large conclusion, this is a book filled with information we need to know about how the world goes mad.

—Jason Moll

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Arafat Calls for Reforms, Elections
—Headline, *Washington Post*, May 16, 2002

Reinventing Government

I, Yasser Arafat, Supreme Chairman, Anti-Zionist Warrior, and President For Life, do officially order the following reforms, in order to democratize and reform my government and otherwise build a bridge to the 21st century:

1. From now on I will promise to hold elections twice as often. At least every six months I will vow to hold elections at some distant point in the future. This will make the Palestinian Authority twice as democratic.
2. I will reduce paperwork for our parole boards. Up until now terrorists convicted of mass murder have languished in prison for up to an hour before they could be released. With bar code scanner technology, we should be able to release terrorists in minutes.
3. I will reduce top-down, command-and-control regulatory diktats. Formerly, suicide bombers were told where to blow up Israelis. From now on, the Office of Faith Based Initiatives (formerly known as Hamas) will issue Suicide Belt Vouchers, which will be redeemable at grocery stores, video rental agencies, and all United Nations offices. I trust the people, not the powerful, to select their own targets.
4. I will reduce corruption. I will support the McCainstafa-Feingoldabdulla campaign finance reform measure. From now on, all bribes must be given in $2,000 hard money briefcases, and the purchase of public officials will be prohibited within 60 days of the start of an intifada.
5. I will decentralize the Security Services. Up until now, my government has had a mere eight or nine separate militias. Now, as part of my Army of One initiative, each Anti-Zionist Warrior will be able to start his own army, with seed money from the European Union, merely by registering via an 800 toll-free number.
6. I will implement all these reforms as soon as the Palestinian Authority establishes its permanent national capital in Tel Aviv.

the weekly Standard
May 27, 2002

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Where the Flat Tax Goes from Here

Alvin Rabushka is the David and Joan Traitel Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution.

In 1981 Robert Hall and I proposed a comprehensive 19 percent flat tax to replace the U.S. personal and corporate income taxes. The idea resulted in numerous congressional bills during the 1980s. It underpinned President Reagan's Tax Reform Act of 1986, which resulted in two rates, 15 and 28 percent, down from a top rate of 70 percent when Reagan took office in 1981. In 1992 presidential candidate Jerry Brown, followed by Steve Forbes in 1996, reinvigorated the flat tax. Congressional Republican leaders chimed in with their support. Nonetheless, since 1991, the U.S. tax code has regressed; three new higher rates were added, with the top rate increased from 28.0 to 39.6 percent.

Despite regression in the United States, the flat tax has been successful in several new countries that emerged from the breakup of the Soviet Union. Estonia enacted a 26 percent flat tax beginning in 1994. Latvia followed suit with a 25 percent flat tax in 1995.

The biggest flat tax success story comes from Russia. In 2001 a 13 percent flat tax took effect, replacing three brackets with a top rate of 30 percent. The new code improved incentives and compliance. In 2001 revenue increased 28 percent in real, inflation-adjusted terms. Effective January 1, 2002, the government reduced the corporate rate from 35 to 24 percent and recently proposed a major reform for small business enterprises (SBEs). SBEs with no more than twenty employees and turnover below $320,000 will be able to pay the lesser of a flat 20 percent tax on profits or a flat 8 percent tax on revenues. SBEs will be exempt from value-added tax, sales tax, property tax, and social insurance tax. Other former Soviet bloc countries may follow in Russia's footsteps.

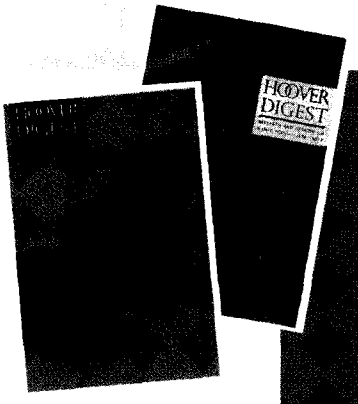
In April 2002 Singapore proposed a major restructuring of its tax system. The centerpiece is a reduction in corporate and personal income tax rates. In the next three years, corporate rates will fall from 24.5 to 20.0 percent, and the top personal income tax rate, from 26 to 20 percent. With this measure, Singapore extends a process of marginal tax-rate reductions that cut the top personal rate from a high of 55 percent in 1961 to 40 percent in 1978, 34 percent in 1980, 30 percent in 1982, and 26 percent in 1985. During this period, the threshold at which the top rate bites increased from S$90,000 to S$750,000 (US$1=S$1.80).

To fill out the story, Hong Kong maintains a flat tax of 15 percent on personal income. The Channel Islands of Jersey and Guernsey impose a 20 percent flat tax. The Freedom Party in Austria proposed a flat tax during the 1999 national election and became part of Austria's governing coalition for the first time in modern history. Other European parties are considering the flat tax in their economic platforms.

All in all, the flat tax is alive and well overseas. Now if only in the United States!

— Alvin Rabushka

Paid for by the Hoover Institution, Stanford University.



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